Catena Aurea

COMMENTARY

ON THE

FOUR GOSPELS,

COLLECTED OUT OF THE

WORKS OF THE FATHERS

BY

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VOL. III PART I

ST. LUKE

OXFORD,

JOHN HENRY PARKER;

J. G. F. AND J. RIVINGTON, LONDON.

MDCCCXLIII

ADVERTISEMENT

THE following Compilation not being admissible into the Library of the Fathers from the date of some few of the authors introduced into it, the Editors of the latter work have been led to publish it in a separate form, being assured that those who have subscribed to their Translations of the entire Treatises of the ancient Catholic divines, will not feel less interest, or find less benefit, in the use of so very judicious and beautiful a selection from them. The Editors refer to the Preface for some account of the natural and characteristic excellences of the work, which will be found as useful in the private study of the Gospels, as it is well adapted for family reading, and full of thought for those who are engaged in religious instruction.

Oxford, May 6, 1841.

PREFACE

THE Catena on St. Luke differs from those on the three other Gospels, in its more frequent citations from the Greek writers. For besides the Commentaries of S. Ambrose and Bede, and certain Homilies of S. Augustine and Gregory, there seems to have been no other Latin work on St. Luke's Gospel which St. Thomas could have used. How far he was himself acquainted with Greek, it seems difficult to determine; but from the expression *feci transferri*, in his Preface to the three later Gospels, it has been supposed, that for this part of his work he employed others to make translations for him from the Greek writers, which he afterwards inserted in his Catena, not always (as he says himself) giving the very words, but frequently only the sense of the passage.

From the ignorance of the Greek language at that time, it was not to be supposed that these translations would be free from error; and when we couple with this the carelessness of transcribers, we cannot be surprised that in course of time the text of the Catena should have become very corrupt, and the sense of whole passages, but particularly the names of their authors, involved in great doubt and obscurity. The mistakes on this latter point Nicolai thinks were chiefly owing to the abbreviated form and character in which the names were written, so that one name was often put for another, from its similarity; as Theophilus for Theophylact; while others were altogether omitted. In Nicolai's edition, however, (which has been followed in the present volume,) very great corrections were made, for which, as the original works of most of the Greek writers quoted by S. Thomas no longer exist, he was chiefly indebted to the Greek Catenæ. By their assistance not only was the text carefully restored and amended from the original Greek, but the references verified afresh, and many for the first time supplied.

It may here then perhaps be useful to give first some account of the Catenæ used by Nicolai, and others which have been referred to in the following translation; next to mention those Fathers whose names are cited in St. Thomas, but their works from which his extracts are taken are either not to be found at all, or at least only fragments of them, in the published editions; and after them a number of inferior writers whom St. Thomas had included under the general title of Græcus, but whose names have now been furnished from the Greek Catenæ.

(1.) The Catena of most use to Nicolai was one formerly in the Mazarin, now in the Royal Library at Paris, (Montf. MSS. p. 1339.) It is said to be of the 13th century, and is compiled from fifty-six Fathers, whose names are clearly marked. But it embraces only the twelve first chapters of St. Luke. For the twelve latter he employed Corderius; but it is much to be regretted that he had not possessed the remainder of the Mazarin MSS. which seems to be existing in the Vatican from the description Maii gives of a fragment he discovered there; and Montfaucon says of the former part, that not the sixth part of it is contained in Corderius. Besides, Corderius is not at all to be trusted as to the names of authors, as may be seen from Maii [a] and Lambecius [b].

Maii has published a considerable part of another Catena, in his ninth vol. Vet. Script. Its date is very near the end of the 11th century, and it is entitled, ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκλογῆς τοῦ Νικητοῦ Σερρῶν. He ascribes the first Catena to the same author, and a similar title is prefixed to a MS. in the Coislin Library, (Bibl. Coisl. No. 201.) of a later date, and containing a Catena on St. Luke of sixty-two Fathers. These three Catenæ, though differing in date, yet very similar in the names and number of the authors cited, must all be traced to the same source. Nor does there seem any reason why they should not be successive copies, only increased as time went on, of the original MS. of Nicetas, whose name they bear. Nicetas flourished about 1077. He was at first Deacon at Constantinople, then Bishop of Serræ in Macedonia, afterwards Archbishop of Heraclea in Thrace. He is proved by Wolf (De Catenis) to have been the author of a Catena on Job, generally assigned to Olympiodorus; and Lambecius (v. 63. iii. 81.) describes a Catena of his on the Psalms. That published by Possinus on St. Matthew, from a MS. in the Library of the Elector of Bavaria, contains extracts from thirty Fathers, with a prologue and several expositions under the name of Nicetas. It seems very probable then that Nicetas was the author of a new class of Catenæ, far exceeding in size and completeness those which previously existed. For among a great number of MSS. Catenæ on the Gospels in the Paris, Venice, and Vienna Libraries, which bear date of the 10th or 11th centuries, there are scarcely any which number more than twelve Fathers, none certainly which approach to the extent of those above mentioned.

Of the MSS. Catenæ on St. Luke, of this date, some have the title prefixed to them, "From Chrysostom and other Fathers." Some again bear the names of Cyril and Origen, but by far the greater number, particularly in the Paris Library, are ascribed to Titus Bostrensis. It is however quite plain, that the Titus Bostrensis, who flourished under Julian in the fourth century, could not have been the author of a Catena containing extracts from the works of Cyril, Chrysostom, and Isidore of Peleusium, who all lived some time later. Combefis (Bibl. Concion. Rec. Auct. p. 49.) thinks that this Titus wrote Commentaries on the Gospels of which only fragments remain, and also the four books ascribed to him against the Manicheans; but that there was a later writer of the same name, perhaps in the 6th century, who was the author of this Catena, and of the Commentary published under the name of Titus in the Bibl. Pat. For he says that there exist, in a MS. Catena on St. Matthew, passages assigned to Titus, which are not in that on St. Luke, and are very far superior to it. And these he conceives to belong to the elder Titus. It seems however most probable, that this Catena on St. Luke which Combefis speaks of, is an abridgment of a larger one, which was compiled from the ancient Titus and other later Fathers [a], and by the same anonymous hand which also compiled that on Matthew, for the latter is always referred to by the former whenever St. Luke repeats what has been before related by St. Matthew

PREFACE

TO THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE

Among. those mysteries of Christ's Incarnation which the Prophet Esaias expressly and plainly foretels, he says, *I will clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering. The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how by my word to uphold the weary. He wakeneth me at morn. At morn He wakeneth my ear to hearken unto Him as my Master.* (Is. 50:3, 4.)

From these words we may understand the subject-matter of St. Luke's Gospel, the method of his writing, the object and condition of the writer.

Augustine. (de Consen. Evang. i. 2, 6.) St. Luke seems to dwell more than the other Evangelists upon the Priestly lineage and person of our Lord, and hence he has been represented under the symbol of a calf, because that is the principal victim of the Priest.

Ambrose. (Prol. in Luc.) The calf being the Priestly victim, this book of the Gospel aptly answers to it, commencing as it does with the Priests, and ending in the calf, which, taking upon itself the sins of men, was sacrificed for the life of the whole world. This sacrifice of the calf also St. Luke describes with greater fulness than the rest.

Gloss. As. then St. Luke's intention was mainly to set forth the Passion of Christ, the subject of his Gospel may be signified by these words; *I will clothe the heavens with blackness, and make sackcloth their covering.* For literally at Christ's Passion there was darkness, and the faith of the disciples was clouded.

Jerome. (sup. Esai. 53, 3.) And Christ was despised and made as one of no account, and His face was hidden and put to shame, that in the human flesh the Divine Power might be concealed.

Jerome. (sup. Esai. 6. 9.) St. Luke's style, as well in his Gospel as in the Acts of the Apostles, is more polished than that of the others, and has a tone of secular eloquence. Hence it is added, *The Lord hath given me the tongue of the learned.*

Ambrose. (sup.) For although the divine Scriptures set aside the exercise of secular wisdom as of that which is rather decked out with a show of words than based upon true reason, yet will those who seek therein find the very examples which they consider most worthy of admiration. For St. Luke, while he has preserved a kind of historic order in his narrative, and made known to us more of our Lord's wonderful works than the other Evangelists, has at the same time contrived to unite the excellences of each kind of wisdom in the course of his Gospel. What more extraordinary in natural wisdom than his revelation that the Holy Spirit was also the Creator of our Lord's Incarnation! In the same book, he teaches morals, as, for example, *in what manner I ought to love my enemy.* (Luke 6:27, 32–35.) Again, he appeals to my reason, when I read, *for he that is faithful in a little will be faithful also in much.* (Luke 16:10.)

Eusebius. (Hist. iii. 4.) St. Luke, a native of Antioch, by profession a Physician, has left us concerning that medicine which he had received from the

Apostles either through his intercourse with them or by tradition, two medical books, whereby not our bodies but our souls may be healed. And hence it follows, *That I should know how by my word to uphold the weary.*

Jerome. (sup. Esai. 50, 4.) For he says that he has received the word from the Lord, by which he supports the weary and wanderer, and restores them to health.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes in vit. Luc.) St. Luke, being by nature of a noble and ardent mind, acquired in his youth the learning of the Greeks. He made himself perfectly acquainted with Grammar and Poetry, as well as complete master of the art of Rhetoric and the power of persuasion. Nor was he surpassed by any one in the gifts of Philosophy; last of all, he learns Medicine. And now by his natural quickness having drunk deep enough of human wisdom, he takes flight to something higher. He hastens accordingly to Judæa, and gains access to the presence and hearing of Christ. Being soon convinced of the truth, he becomes a true disciple of Christ, and has frequent intercourse with his Master. Hence it follows, *He wakeneth me at morn*, (in my youth, as it were, to secular wisdom). *At morn He wakeneth my ear* (to divine wisdom) *to hearken unto Him as my Master*, i. e. Christ Himself.

Eusebius. (sup.) It is said that St. Luke wrote his Gospel as it was declared to him by the mouth of St. Paul, as St. Mark also wrote those things which were told him by St. Peter.

Chrysostom. (sup. Matt. Hom. iv.) Each of them imitated his master; the one Paul, flowing more rapidly than the torrent; the other Peter, studying conciseness.

Augustine. (de Con. Evang. iv. 9.) They wrote at a time when they both were able to receive the approbation not only of the Church of Christ, but of the Apostles themselves, still abiding in the flesh. And thus much may suffice to have been said by way of Preface.

COMMENTARY

ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. LUKE

CHAP. 1

1:1–4

Ver. 1. Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2. Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word:

3. It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4. That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

Eusebius. (Eccl. Hist. iii. 4.) St. Luke at the commencement of his Gospel has told us the reason of his writing, which was, that many others had rashly taken upon themselves to give accounts of those things of which he had a more certain knowledge. And this is his meaning when he says, *Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of things.*

Ambrose. (Expos. Ev. Luc. l. i. c. i.) For as many among the Jewish people prophesied by inspiration of the Spirit of God, but others were false prophets rather than prophets, so now also have many attempted to write Gospels which the good moneychanger refuses to pass. One gospel is mentioned which the twelve Apostles are said to have written; another Basilides presumed to write; and another is said to have been by Matthias.

Bede. (in procem. Lucæ.) The many who are mentioned, he reckons not so much by their number, as by the variety of their manifold heresies; men who were not endued with the gift of the Holy Spirit, but engaging in a vain work, have rather set forth in order a relation of events, than woven a true history.

Ambrose. Now they who have attempted to set forth these things in order have laboured by themselves, and have not succeeded in what they attempted. For without the assistance of man come the gifts and the grace of God, which, when it is infused, is wont so to flow, that the genius of the writer is not exhausted, but ever abounding. He well says therefore, *Of things which have been fully accomplished among us*, or which abound among us. For that which abounds is lacking to none, and no one doubts about that which is fulfilled, since the accomplishment builds up our faith, and the end manifests it.

Titus Bostrensis. (in procem. Lucæ.) He says, *of things*, because not by shadows, as the heretics say, did Jesus accomplish His advent in the flesh, but being as He was *the Truth*, so in very truth He performed His work.

Origen. (Hom. i. in Luc.) The effect upon his own mind, St. Luke explains by the expression, *of the things which have been fully accomplished among us*, i. e. have had their full manifestation among us, (as the Greek word πεπληροφορημένων signifies, which the Latin cannot express in one word,) for he had been convinced of them by sure faith and reason, and wavered not in any thing.

Chrysostom. (Comm. in Act. Apost. Hom. i.) The Evangelist was so far from being content with his single testimony, that he refers the whole to the Apostles, seeking from them a confirmation of his words; and therefore he adds, *as they handed them down to us, who were themselves from the beginning eyewitnesses.*

Eusebius. (sup.) Luke is a sure witness, because he obtained his knowledge of the truth either from St. Paul's instructions, or the instructions and traditions of the other Apostles, who were themselves eyewitnesses from the beginning.

Chrysostom. (sup.) He says, *were eyewitnesses*, because this is our chief ground for believing in a thing, that we derive it from those who were actually eyewitnesses.

Origen. It is plain that of one kind of knowledge, the end is in the knowledge itself, as in geometry; but of another kind, the end is counted to be in the work, as in medicine; and so it is in the word of God, and therefore having signified the knowledge by the words *were themselves eyewitnesses*, he points out the work by what follows, *and were ministers of the word.*

Ambrose. This expression is used, not that we should suppose the ministry of the word to consist rather in seeing than hearing, but that, because by *the word* was meant not a word that can be spoken by the mouth, but one of real existence, we may understand *that* to have been not a common, but a Heavenly Word, to which the Apostles ministered.

Cyril of Alexandria. (non occ.) In what he says of the Apostles having been eyewitnesses of the word, he agrees with John, who says, *The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory*. For the Word by means of the flesh was made visible.

Ambrose. Now not only did they see the Lord in the body, but also in the Word. For *they* saw the Word, who with Moses and Elias saw the glory of the Word. Others did not see it, who could only see the body.

Origen. It is written in Exodus, *The people saw the voice of the Lord.* (Exod. 20:18.) Now a voice is rather heard than seen. But it was so written, to shew us that men see the voice of the Lord with other eyes, which they only have who are worthy of them. Again in the Gospel, it is not the voice that is perceived, but the Word, which is more excellent than the voice.

Theophylact. (Præf. in Luc.) By these words it is plainly implied, that Luke was not a disciple from the beginning, but became one in course of time; others were disciples from the beginning, as Peter, and the sons of Zebedee.

Bede. Nevertheless both Matthew and John were obliged in many things that they wrote to consult those who had had means of knowing the infancy, childhood, and genealogy of our Lord, and of seeing the things which he did.

Origen. St. Luke hereby explains to us the source of his writing; seeing that what things he wrote, he gained not from report, but had himself traced them up from the beginning. Hence it follows, *It seemed good to me also, having carefully investigated every thing from the very first, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus.*

Ambrose. When he says, *It seemed good to me*, he does not deny that it seemed good to God: for it is God who predisposes the wills of men. Now no one has doubted that this book of the Gospel is more full of details than the others; by these words then he claims to himself, not any thing that is false, but the truth; and therefore he says, "It seemed good to me, having investigated every thing, to write." Not to write every thing, but from a review of every thing; "for if all the things which Jesus did were written, I do not think the world itself could contain them." (John 21:25.) But purposely has Luke passed by things that were written by others, in order that each book of the Gospel might be distinguished by certain mysteries and miracles peculiar to itself.

Theophylact. (in loc.) He writes to Theophilus, a man probably of some distinction, and a governor; for the form, *Most excellent*, was not used except to rulers and governors. As for example, Paul says to Festus, *Most excellent Festus.* (Acts 26:25.)

Bede. (sup.) Theophilus means, "loving God," or "being loved by God." Whoever then loves God, or desires to be loved by Him, let him think this Gospel to have been written to him, and preserve it as a gift presented to him, a pledge entrusted to his care. The promise was not to explain the meaning of certain new and strange things to Theophilus, but to set forth the truth of those words in which he had been instructed; as it is added, *That thou mightest know the truth of those words in which thou hast been instructed*; that is, "that thou mightest be able to know in what order each thing was said or done by the Lord."

Chrysostom. (sup.) Or it may be, "That thou mightest feel certain and satisfied as to the truth of those things which thou hast heard, now that thou beholdest the same in writing."

Theophylact. For frequently, when a thing is asserted by any one, and not expressed in writing, we suspect it of falsehood; but when a man has written what he asserts, we are the more inclined to believe it, as if, unless he thought it to be true, he would not commit it to writing.

Greek Expositor. (Photius, comment. in Luc.) The whole Preface of this Evangelist contains two things; first, the condition of those who wrote Gospels before him, (Matthew and Mark for example;) secondly, the reason why he also himself proposed to write one.

Having said, "attempted," a word which may be applied both to those who presumptuously engage upon a subject, and those who reverently handle it, he determines the doubtful expression by two additions; first, by the words, *Of things which have been fully accomplished among us*; and secondly, *As they handed them down to us, who were eyewitnesses from the beginning.* The word *handed down* seems to shew, that the eye-witnesses themselves had a commission to transmit the truth. For as they handed it down, so it became others also receiving it in due order, in their turn to publish it. But from the not depositing in writing what had been delivered, several difficulties through lapse of time sprang up. Rightly then did those who had received the tradition from the first eye-witnesses of the Word, establish it in writing for the whole world; thereby repelling falsehood, destroying forgetfulness, and making up from tradition itself a perfect whole.

1:5–7

5. There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judæa, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

6. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

Chrysostom. (noc occ.) St. Luke commences the history of his Gospel with Zacharias and the birth of John; relating one marvellous event before another, the less before the greater. For since a virgin was about to become a mother, it had been fore-ordained by grace that the old should previously conceive. He fixes the time, when he says, *In the days of Herod*, and in the following words adds his rank, *king of Judæa.* (in Matt. cap. 2.). There was

another Herod, who killed John; he was tetrarch, whereas this one was king.

Bede. (in Luc. Evang.) Now the time of Herod, i. e. of a foreign king, bears witness to our Lord's coming, for it had been foretold, *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.* (Gen. 49:10.) For from the time that our fathers came out of Egypt, they were governed by judges of their own nation, until the Prophet Samuel; and then by kings, until the carrying away to Babylon. But after the return from Babylon, the chief power was in the hands of priests, until the time of Hyrcanus, who was both king and high priest. He was slain by Herod, after which the government of the kingdom was delivered over by the command of Augustus Cæsar to this same Herod, a foreigner, in whose thirty-first year, according to the prophecy we have mentioned, *Shiloh* came.

Ambrose. Divine Scripture teaches us with respect to those whom we commemorate, that not only the characters of the men themselves, but of their parents also, ought to be praised, that they might be distinguished by an inheritance, as it were, handed down to them of unspotted purity. Now not only from his parents, but also from his ancestors, St. John derives his illustrious descent, a descent not exalted by secular power, but venerable from its sanctity. Complete then is that praise which comprehends birth, character, office, actions, and judgments.

The office was that of the Priesthood, as it is said, *A certain Priest of the name of Zacharias.*

Bede. (in Homil. in vigil. S. Joh. Bap.) For John was allotted a Priestly tribe, that he might with the more authority herald forth a change of priesthood.

Ambrose. His birth is implied in the mention made of his ancestors. *Of the course of Abia*, i. e. of high rank among the noblest families.

Bede. There were Princes of the Sanctuary or High Priests, both of the sons of Eleazar and the sons of Thamar, whose courses according to their respective services when they entered into the House of God David divided into twenty-four lots, of which the family of Abia (from which Zacharias was descended) obtained the eighth lot. (1 Chron. 24.) But it was not without meaning that the first preacher of the new covenant was born with the rights of the eighth lot; because as the old Covenant is often expressed by the seventh number on account of the Sabbath, so frequently is the new Covenant by the eighth, because of the sacrament of our Lord's or our resurrection.

Theophylact. Wishing to shew also that John was legally of Priestly descent, Luke adds, *And his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth*, for it was not permitted to the Jews to take a wife from any other tribe but their own. Elisabeth by interpretation signifies "rest," Zacharias "the remembrance of the land."

Bede. John was born of just parents, that so he might the more boldly give precepts of justice to the people, which he had not learnt as novelties, but had received by right of inheritance from his ancestors. Hence it follows, *And they were both just before God.*

Ambrose. Here their whole character is comprehended in their justice, but it is well said *before God*, for a man by affecting a popular good-will might seem just to me, but not be just before God, if that justice instead of springing from simpleness of heart, was a mere pretence carried on by flattery. Perfect then is the praise, "that a man is just before God;" for he only is perfect who is approved by Him who cannot be deceived. St. Luke comprehends the action in the commandment, the doing justice in the justification. Hence it follows, *walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord.* For when we obey the command of heaven we walk in the commandments of the Lord, when we observe justice we seem to possess the justification of the Lord. But to be "blameless" we must "provide things honest, not only before God, but also before men"; (Prov. 3:4.) there is no blame when both motive and action are alike good, but a too austere righteousness often provokes censure. A righteous act may also be done unrighteously, as when a man out of ostentation gives largely to the poor, which is not without just cause of blame. It follows, *And they had no son, because Elisabeth was barren.*

Chrysostom. (ex Hom. in Gen. 49.) Not only Elisabeth, but the wives of the Patriarchs also, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, were barren, which was counted a disgrace among the ancients. Not that their barrenness was the effect of sin, since all were just and virtuous, but ordained rather for your benefit, that when you saw a virgin giving birth to the Lord, you might not be faithless, or perplexing your mind with respect to the womb of the barren.

Theophylact. And that you might learn that the law of God seeketh not a bodily increase of sons but a spiritual, both were far advanced, not only in the body but in the Spirit, "making ascents in their heart [b]," having their life as the day not as the night, and walking honestly as in the day. (Ps. 84:6, 1 Thess. 5:5.)

1:8–10

8. And it came to pass, that while he executed the Priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9. According to the custom of the Priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

Bede. The Lord appointed by the hand of Moses one High Priest, at whose death another was to succeed in due order. This was observed until the time of David, who by the command of the Lord increased the number of the Priests; and so at this time Zacharias is said to have been performing his Priest's office in the order of his course, as it follows: *But it came to pass, when Zacharias was performing the Priest's office in the order of his course before God, according to the custom of the Priesthood, his lot was, &c.*

Ambrose. Zacharias seems here to be designated High Priest, because into the second tabernacle went the High Priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and the sins of the people. (Heb. 9:7.)

Bede. It was not by a new lot that he was chosen when the incense was to be burnt, but by the old lot, whereby according to the order of his Priesthood he succeeded in the course of Abia. It follows, *And all the multitude of the people, &c.* Incense was ordered to be carried into the Holy of Holies by the High Priest, the whole people waiting without the temple. It was to be on the tenth day of the seventh month, and this day was to be called the day of expiation or propitiation, the mystery of which day the Apostle explaining to the Hebrews, points to Jesus as the true High Priest, who in His own blood has entered the secret places of heaven that he might reconcile the Father unto us, and intercede for the sins of those who still wait praying before the doors.

Ambrose. This then is that High Priest who is still sought by lot, for as yet the true High Priest is unknown; for he who is chosen by lot is not obtained by man's judgment. That High Priest therefore was sought for, and another typified, the true High Priest for ever, who not by the blood of victims, but by

His own blood, was to reconcile God the Father to mankind. Then indeed there were changes in the Priesthood, now it is unchangeable.

1:11–14

11. And there appeared unto him an angel of the the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 2. de Inc. Dei Nat.) When Zacharias entered into the temple to offer up prayers to God for all men, interceding between God and man, he saw an angel standing within, as it is said, *And there appeared unto him an angel.*

Ambrose. It is well said that there *appeared* an angel to Zacharias, who suddenly beheld him; and this is the expression especially used by Divine Scripture with respect to angels or God, that what cannot be seen beforehand may be said to *appear.* For things which are the objects of our senses are not seen as He is seen, Who is seen only as He will, and Whose nature is not to be seen.

Origen. And we speak thus not only of the present time, but also of the future. When we shall have passed from the world, God will not appear unto all men, nor will the angels, but unto him only who has a clean heart. The place will neither hinder nor serve any one.

Chrysostom. (Hom. li. in Matt.) But the angel evidently came not in a dream, because the tidings he brought were too hard to be understood, and needed therefore a more visible and marvellous manifestation.

Damascene. (de fide Orthodox. ii. 3.) Angels, however, are revealed not as they really are, but transformed (as men are able to behold them) into whatever the Lord commands.

Theophylact. It is said *the altar of incense*, because the other altar was set apart for burnt offerings.

Ambrose. It was not without good reason that the angel appeared in the temple, for the coming of the true High Priest was now announced, and the Heavenly Sacrifice was preparing at which angels were to minister. For one cannot doubt that an angel stands by where Christ is sacrificed. But he appeared at the right hand of the altar of incense, because he brought down the token of Divine mercy. *For the Lord is on my right hand, so that I should not be moved.* (Ps. 16:8.)

Chrysostom. (de Inc. Dei Nat.) The justest of men can not without fear behold an angel; Zacharias therefore, not sustaining the sight of the angel's presence, nor able to withstand his brightness, is troubled, as it is added, *Zacharias was troubled.* But as it happens, when a charioteer is frightened, and has let loose his reins, the horses run headlong, and the chariot is overturned; so is it with the soul, when it is taken by any surprise or alarm; as it is here added, *and fear fell upon him.*

Origen. A new face suddenly presenting itself to the human eye, troubles and startles the mind. The angel knowing this to be the nature of man, first dispels the alarm, as it follows, *But the angel said unto him, Fear not.*

Athanasius. (in vita Anton.) Whereby it is not difficult to discern between good and bad spirits, for if joy has succeeded to fear, we may know that relief has come from God, because the peace of the soul is a sign of the Divine Presence; but if the fear remains unshaken, it is an enemy who is seen.

Origen. The angel not only soothes his fears, but gladdens him with good tidings, adding, *For thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear a son.*

Augustine. (de Quæst. Evan. l. i. q. l.) Now here we must first consider that it is not likely that Zacharias, when offering sacrifice for the sins or for the salvation or redemption of the people, would neglect the public petitions, to pray (though himself an old man, and his wife also old) that he might receive children; and, next, above all that no one prays for what he despairs of ever obtaining. And even up to this time, sc much had he despaired of ever having children, that he would not believe, even when an angel promised it to him. The words, *Thy prayer is heard*, must be understood therefore to refer to the people; and as salvation, redemption, and the putting away of the sins of the people was to be through Christ, it is told Zacharias that a son shall be born to him, because that son was ordained to be the forerunner of Christ.

Chrysostom. (sup.) Or it means, that this was to be the proof of his prayer having been heard, namely, that a son should be born to him, crying, *Behold the Lamb of God!*

Theophylact. As if when Zacharias asks, *How shall I know this?* the angel answers, Because Elisabeth shall bring forth a son, thou shalt believe that the sins of thy people are forgiven.

Ambrose. Or, as follows; Divine mercy is ever full and overflowing, not narrowed to a single gift, but pouring in an abundant store of blessings; as in this case, where first the fruit of his prayer is promised; and next, that his barren wife shall bear a child, whose name is announced as follows; *And thou shalt call his name John.*

Bede. It is meant as a token of particular merit, when a man has a name *given* him or *changed* by God.

Chrysostom. (Joann. Hom. xviii.) Which must be the meaning here, for those who from their earliest years were destined to shine forth in virtue, received their names at the very first from a divine source; while those who were to rise up in later years, had a name given them afterwards.

Bede. John is therefore interpreted, "one in whom is grace, or the grace of God;" by which name it is declared, first, that grace was given to his parents, to whom in their old age a son was to be born; next, to John himself, who was to become great before the Lord; lastly, also to the children of Israel, whom he was to convert to the Lord. Hence it follows, *And he shall be a joy unto thee, and a cause of rejoicing.*

Origen. For when a just man is born into the world, the authors of his birth rejoice; but when one is born who is to be as it were an exile to labour and

punishment, they are struck with terror and dismay.

Ambrose. But a saint is not only the blessing of his parents, but also the salvation of many; as it follows, *And many shall rejoice at his birth*. Parents are reminded here to rejoice at the birth of saints, and to give thanks. For it is no slight gift of God to vouchsafe unto us children, to be the transmitters of our race, to be the heirs of succession.

1:15–17

15. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Ambrose. Next to his becoming the rejoicing of many, the greatness of his virtue is prophesied; as it is said, *For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord*. The greatness signified is not of the body, but of the soul. Greatness in the sight of the Lord is greatness of soul, greatness of virtue.

Theophylact. For many are called great before men, but not before God, as the hypocrites. And so in like manner was John called great, as the parents of John were called just, *before the Lord*.

Ambrose. He extended not the boundaries of an empire, nor brought back in triumph the spoils of war, (but, what is far greater,) preaching in the desert he overcame by his great virtue the delights of the world, and the lusts of the flesh. Hence it follows; *And he shall drink no wine nor strong drink*.

Bede. *Sicera* is interpreted "drunkenness," and by the word the Hebrews understand any drink that can intoxicate, (whether made from fruits, corn, or any other thing.) But it was part of the law of the Nazarites to give up wine and strong drink at the time of their consecration. (Numb. 6:5.) Hence John, and others like him, that they might always remain Nazarites, (i. e. holy,) are careful always to abstain from these things. For he ought not to be drunk with wine (in which is licentiousness) who desires to be filled with the new wine of the Holy Spirit; rightly then is he, from whom all drunkenness with wine is utterly put away, filled with the grace of the Spirit. But it follows, *And he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit*.

Ambrose. On whomsoever the Holy Spirit is poured, in him there is fulness of great virtue; as in St. John, who before he was born, when yet in his mother's womb, bore witness to the grace of the Spirit which he had received, when leaping in the womb of his parent he hailed the glad tidings of the coming of the Lord. There is one spirit of this life, another of grace. The former has its beginning at birth, its end at death; the latter is not tied down to times and seasons, is not quenched by death, is not shut out of the womb.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes sup.) But what John's work is to be, and what he will do through the Holy Spirit, is shewn as follows; *And many of the children of Israel shall he turn, &c.*

Origen. John indeed turned many, but it is the Lord's work to turn all to God their Father.

Bede. Now since John (who, bearing witness to Christ, baptized the people in His faith) is said to have turned the children of Israel to the Lord their God, it is plain that Christ is the God of Israel. Let the Arians then cease to deny that Christ our Lord is God. Let the Photinians [c] blush to ascribe Christ's beginning to the Virgin. Let the Manichæns no longer believe that there is one God of the people of Israel, another of the Christians.

Ambrose. But we need no testimony that St. John turned the hearts of many, for to this point we have the express witness of both prophetic and and evangelical Scriptures. For the voice of one crying in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make His paths straight*; and his baptisms thronged by the people, declare the rapid progress of conversion. For the forerunner of Christ preached, not himself, but the Lord; and therefore it follows, *And he shall go before Him*. It was well said, that he shall go before Him, who both in birth and in death was His forerunner.

Origen. *In the spirit and power of Elijah*.—He says not, in the mind of Elijah, but *in the spirit and power*. For the spirit which was in Elijah came upon John, and in like manner his power.

Ambrose. For never is the spirit without power, nor power without the spirit. And therefore it is said, *in the spirit and power*; because holy Elijah had great power and grace. Power, so that he turned back the false hearts of the people to faith; power of abstinence, and patience, and the spirit of prophecy. Elijah was in the wilderness, in the wilderness also was John. The one sought not the favour of king Ahab; the other despised that of Herod. The one divided Jordan; the other brought men to the Saving waters; John, the forerunner of our Lord's first coming; Elijah of His latter.

Bede. But what was foretold of Elias by Malachi, is now spoken by the angel of John; as it follows, *That he should turn the hearts of the parents to the children*; (Mal. 4:5, 6.) pouring into the minds of the people, by his preaching, the spiritual knowledge of the ancient saints. *And the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*; i. e. not laying claim to righteousness from the works of the law, but seeking salvation by faith. (Rom. 10. sup.)

Greek Expositor. Or else; The Jews were the parents of John and the Apostles; but, nevertheless, from pride and infidelity raged violently against the Gospel. Therefore, like dutiful children, John first, and the Apostles after him, declared to them the truth, winning them over to their own righteousness and wisdom. So also will Elias convert the remnant of Hebrews to the truth of the Apostles.

Bede. But because he had said that Zacharias' prayer for the people was heard, he adds, *To make ready a people prepared*[1] *for the Lord*; by which he teaches in what manner the same people must be healed and prepared; namely, by repenting at the preaching of John and believing on Christ.

Theophylact. Or, John made ready a people not disbelieving but prepared, that is, previously fitted to receive Christ.

Origen. This sacrament[2] of preparation is even now fulfilled in the world, for even now the spirit and power of John must come upon the soul, before it believes in Jesus Christ.

1:18–22

18. And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21. And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them and remained speechless.

Chrysostom. (Hom. ii. De Inc. Nat. Dei sup.) Considering his own age, and moreover the barrenness of his wife, Zacharias doubted; as it is said, *And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this?* as if he said, "How shall this be?" And he adds the reason of his doubting; *For I am an old man.* An unseasonable time of life, an ill-suited nature; the planter infirm, the soil barren. But it is thought by some a thing unpardonable. in the priest, that he raises a course of objections; for whenever God declares any thing, it becomes us to receive it in faith, and moreover, disputes of this kind are the mark of a rebellious spirit. Hence it follows; *And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, who stand before God.*

Bede. As if he says, "If it were man who promised these miracles, one might with impunity demand a sign, but when an angel promises, it is then not right to doubt. It follows; *And I am sent to speak to thee.*

Chrysostom. (sup.) That when you hear that I am sent from God, you should deem none of the things which are said unto thee to be of man, for I speak not of myself, but declare the message of Him who sends me. And this is the merit and excellence of a messenger to relate nothing of his own.

Bede. Here we must remark, that the angel testifies, that he both stands before God, and is sent to bring good tidings to Zacharias.

Gregory. (Hom. xxxiv. in Evang.) For when angels come to us, they so outwardly fulfil their ministry, as at the same time inwardly to be never absent from His sight; since, though the angelic spirit is circumscribed, the highest Spirit, which is God, is not circumscribed. The angels therefore even when sent are before Him, because on whatever mission they go, they pass within Him.

Bede. But he gives him the sign which he asks for, that he who spoke in unbelief, might now by silence learn to believe; as it follows; *and, behold, thou shall be dumb.*

Chrysostom. (sup.) That the bonds might be transferred from the powers of generation to the vocal organs. From no regard to the priesthood was he spared, but for this reason was the more smitten, because in a matter of faith he ought to have set an example to others.

Theophylact. (cap. i.) Because the word in the Greek (κωφὸς) may also signify *deaf*, he well says, *Because thou believest not, thou shalt be deaf, and shalt not be able to speak.* For most reasonably he suffered these two things; as disobedient, he incurs the penalty of deafness; as an objector, of silence.

Chrysostom. (sup.) But the Angel says, *And, behold*; in other words, "At this instant." But mark the mercy of God in what follows: *Until the day in which these things shall be performed.* As if he said, "When by the issues of events I shall have proved my words, and thou shalt perceive that thou art rightly punished, I will remove the punishment from thee." And he points out the cause of the punishment, adding, *Because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season*; not considering His power Who sent me, and before Whom I stand. But if he who was incredulous about a mortal birth *is punished*, how shall he escape vengeance, who speaks falsely of the heavenly and unspeakable birth?

Greek Expositor. (Antipater Bostrensis.) Now while these things were going on within, the delay excited surprise among the multitudes who were waiting without, as it follows: *And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried.* And while various suspicions were going about, each man repeating them as it pleased him, Zacharias coming forth told by his silence what he secretly endured. Hence it follows, *And when he came out, he could not speak.*

Theophylact. But Zacharias beckoned to the people, who perhaps enquired the cause of his silence, which, as he was not able to speak, he signified to them by nodding. Hence it follows, *And he beckoned to them, and remained speechless.*

Ambrose. But a nod is a certain action of the body, without speech endeavouring to declare the will, yet not expressing it.

1:23–25

23. And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25. Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

Bede. During the time of their course, the priests of the temple were so occupied by their office, that they kept themselves not only from the society of their wives, but even from the very threshold of their houses. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days were accomplished, &c.* For as there was then required a priestly succession from the root of Aaron, of necessity then a time was appointed for keeping up the inheritance. But as now not a carnal succession, but spiritual perfection, is looked for, the priests are enjoined (in order that they might ever be able to serve the altar) the perpetual observance of chastity. It follows: *But after those days, &c.* that is, after the days of Zacharias's ministration were completed. But these things were done in the month of September, the twenty-second day of the month, upon which the Jews were bound to observe the feast of the Tabernacles, just before the equinox, at which the night began to be longer than the day, because Christ must increase, but John must decrease. And those days of fasting were not without their meaning; for by the mouth of John, repentance and mortification were to be preached to men. It follows: *And she hid herself.* (see John 3:30.)

Ambrose. What reason then for concealment, except shame? For there are certain allowed times in wedlock, when it is becoming to attend to the begetting of children; while the years thrive, while there is hope of child-bearing. But when in good time old age has come on, and the period of life is more fitted for governing children, than begetting them, it is a shame to bear about the signs of pregnancy, however lawful. It is a shame to be laden with the burden of another age, and for the womb to swell with the fruit of not one's own time of life. It was a shame then to her on account of her age; and hence we may understand the reason why they did not at this time come together, for surely she who blushed not at their coming together in their old age, would not blush at her child-bearing; and yet she blushes at the parental burden, while she yet is unconscious of the religious mystery. But she who hid herself because she had conceived a son, began to glory that she carried in her womb a prophet.

Origen. And therefore he says, *Five months*, that is, until Mary should conceive, and her babe leaping with joy should prophesy.

Ambrose. And though she might blush at the time of her child-bearing, on the other hand she rejoiced that she was free from reproach, saying, *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me.*

Chrysostom. Truly He has loosed her barrenness, a supernatural gift He has bestowed upon her, and the unfruitful rock has produced the green blade. He has taken away her disgrace, in that He has made her to bring forth. Hence it follows: *In the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.*

Ambrose. For it is a shame among women not to receive that reward of marriage, which is the only cause of their being married.

Chrysostom. (Homil. de Anna.) Her joy therefore is twofold. The Lord has taken away from her the mark of barrenness, and also given her an illustrious offspring. In the case of other births, the coming together of the parents only occurs; this birth was the effect of heavenly grace.

Bede. Now mystically by Zacharias may be signified the Jewish Priesthood, by Elisabeth the law itself; which, well administered by the teaching of the Priests, ought to have borne spiritual children to God, but was not able, *because the Law made no one perfect.* (Heb. 7:19, 1 Tim. 1:8.) Both were just, because the law is good, and the Priesthood for that time holy; both were well stricken in years, because at Christ's coming both the Law and Priesthood were just bending to old age. Zacharias enters the temple, because it is the priest's office to enter into the sanctuary of heavenly mysteries. There was a multitude without the doors, because the multitude cannot penetrate mysteries. When he places frankincense on the altar, he discovers that John will be born; for while the teachers are kindled with the flame of divine reading, they find the grace of God flow to them through Jesus: and this is done by an angel, *for the Law was ordained by angels.* (Gal. 3:19.)

Ambrose. But in one man the voice of the people was put to silence, because in one man the whole people was addressing God. For the word of God has come over to us, and in us is not silent. He is dumb who understands not the Law; for why should you think the man who knows not a sound, to be more dumb than him who knows not a mystery. The Jewish people are like to one beckoning, who cannot make his actions intelligible.

Bede. And yet Elisabeth conceives John, because the more inward parts of the Law abound with sacraments of Christ. She conceals her conception five months, because Moses in five books set forth the mysteries of Christ; or because the dispensation of Christ is represented by the words or deeds of the saints, in the five ages of the world.

1:26–27

26. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27. To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

Bede. Because either the Incarnation of Christ was to be in the sixth age of the world, or because it was to serve to the fulfilling of the law, rightly in the sixth month of John's conception was an angel sent to Mary, to tell her that a Saviour should be born. Hence it is said, *And in the sixth month, &c.* We must understand the sixth month to be March, on the twenty-fifth day of which our Lord is reported to have been conceived, and to have suffered, as also to have been born on the twenty-fifth day of December. But if either the one day we believe to be the vernal equinox, or the other the winter solstice, it happens that with the increase of light He was conceived or born Who lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. But if any one shall prove, that before the time of our Lord's nativity or conception, light began either to increase, or supersede the darkness, we then say, that it was because John, before the appearance of His coming, began to preach the kingdom of heaven.

Basil. (in Esai. 6.) The heavenly spirits visit us, not as it seems fit to them, but as the occasion conduces to our advantage, for they are ever looking upon the glory and fulness of the Divine Wisdom; hence it follows, *The angel Gabriel was sent.*

Gregory. (Hom. 34, in Evan.) To the virgin Mary was sent, not any one of the angels, but the archangel Gabriel; for upon this service it was meet that the highest angel should come, as being the bearer of the highest of all tidings. He is therefore marked by a particular name, to signify what was his effectual part in the work. For Gabriel is interpreted, "the strength of God." By the strength of God then was He to be announced Who was coming as the God of strength, and mighty in battle, to put down the powers of the air.

Gloss. (interlin.) But the place is also added whither he is sent, as it follows, *To a city, Nazareth.* For it was told that He would come a Nazarite, (i. e. the holy of the holy.)

Bede. (in Homil. de fest Annunt.) It was a fit beginning for man's restoration, that an angel should be sent down from God to consecrate a virgin by a divine birth, for the first cause of man's perdition was the Devil sending a serpent to deceive a woman by the spirit of pride.

Augustine. (de san. Virg. cap. vi.) *To a virgin*, for Christ could be born from virginity alone, seeing He could not have an equal in His birth. It was necessary for our Head by this mighty miracle to be born according to the flesh of a virgin, that He might signify that his members were to be born in the spirit of a virgin Church.

Pseudo-Jerome. (Hieron. vol. xi. 92. De Assumpt.) And rightly an angel is sent to the virgin, because the virgin state is ever akin to that of angels. Surely in the flesh to live beyond the flesh is not a life on earth but in heaven.

Chrysostom. (sup. Mat. Hom. 4.) The angel announces the birth to the virgin not after the conception, lest she should be thereby too much troubled, but before the conception he addresses her, not in a dream, but standing by her in visible shape. For as great indeed were the tidings she receives, she

needed before the issue of the event an extraordinary visible manifestation.

Ambrose. Scripture has rightly mentioned that she was *espoused*, as well as a virgin, a *virgin*, that she might appear free from all connexion with man; *espoused*, that she might not be branded with the disgrace of sullied virginity, whose swelling womb seemed to bear evident marks of her corruption. But the Lord had rather that men should cast a doubt upon His birth than upon His mother's purity. He knew how tender is a virgin's modesty, and how easily assailed the reputation of her chastity, nor did He think the credit of His birth was to be built up by His mother's wrongs. It follows therefore, that the holy Mary's virginity was of as untainted purity as it was also of unblemished reputation. Nor ought there, by an erroneous opinion, to be left the shadow of an excuse to living virgins, that the mother of our Lord even seemed to be evil spoken of. But what could be imputed to the Jews, or to Herod, if they should seem to have persecuted an adulterous offspring? And how could He Himself say, *I came not to abolish the law, but to fulfil it*, (Matt. 5:18.) if He should seem to have had his beginning from a violation of the law, for the issue of an unmarried person is condemned by the law? (Deut. 23:17.) Not to add that also greater credit is given to the words of Mary, and the cause of falsehood removed? For it might seem that unmarried becoming pregnant, she had wished to shade her guilt by a lie; but an espoused person has no reason for lying, since to women child-birth is the reward of wedlock, the grace of the marriage bed. Again, the virginity of Mary was meant to baffle the prince of the world, who, when he perceived her espoused to a man, could cast no suspicion on her offspring.

Origen. For if she had had no husband, soon would the thought have stolen into the Devil's mind, how she who had known no man could be pregnant. It was right that the conception should be Divine, something more exalted than human nature.

Ambrose. But still more has it baffled the princes of the world, for the malice of devils soon detects even hidden things, while they who are occupied in worldly vanities, can not know the things of God. But moreover, a more powerful witness of her purity is adduced, her husband, who might both have been indignant at the injury, and revenged the dishonour, if he also had not acknowledged the mystery; of whom it is added, *Whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.*

Bede. (in Homil. de Annunt. sup.) Which last applies not only to Joseph, but also to Mary, for the Law commanded that every one should take a wife out of his own tribe or family. It follows, *And the virgin's name was Mary.*

Bede. Maria, in Hebrew, is the star of the sea; but in Syriac it is interpreted Mistress, and well, because Mary was thought worthy to be the mother of the Lord of the whole world, and the light of endless ages.

1:28–29

28. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

29. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Ambrose. Mark the virgin by her manner of life. Alone in an inner chamber, unseen by the eyes of men, discovered only by an angel; as it is said, *And the angel came in unto her.* That she might not be dishonoured by any ignoble address, she is saluted by an angel.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Diem Nat. Orat. in Christi.) Far different then to the news formerly addressed to the woman, is the announcement now made to the Virgin. In the former, the cause of sin was punished by the pains of childbirth; in the latter, through gladness, sorrow is driven away. Hence the angel not unaptly proclaims joy to the Virgin, saying, *Hail.*

Greek Expositor. (Geometer) But that she was judged worthy of the nuptials is attested by his saying, *Full of grace.* For it is signified as a kind of token or marriage gift of the bridegroom, that she was fruitful in graces. For of the things which he mentions, the one appertains to the bride, the other to the bridegroom.

Pseudo-Jerome. (Jerome sup.) And it is well said, *Full of grace*, for to others, grace comes in part; into Mary at once the fulness of grace wholly infused itself. She truly is full of grace through whom has been poured forth upon every creature the abundant rain of the Holy Spirit. But already He was with the Virgin Who sent the angel to the Virgin. The Lord preceded His messenger, for He could not be confined by place Who dwells in all places. Whence it follows, *The Lord is with thee.*

Pseudo-Aug. (Aug. in Serm. de Annunt. iii. app. 195.) More than with me, for He Himself is in thy heart, He is (made) in thy womb, He fills thy soul, He fills thy womb.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer) But this is the sum of the whole message. The Word of God, as the Bridegroom, effecting an incomprehensible union, Himself, as it were, the same both planting, and being planted, hath moulded the whole nature of man into Himself. But comes last the most perfect and comprehensive salutation; *Blessed art thou among women.* i. e. Alone, far before all other women; that women also should be blessed in thee, as men are in thy Son; but rather both in both. For as by one man and one woman came at once both sin and sorrow, so now also by one woman and one man hath both blessing and joy been restored, and poured forth upon all.

Ambrose. But mark the Virgin by her bashfulness, for she was afraid, as it follows; *And when she heard, she was troubled*, It is the habit of virgins to tremble, and to be ever afraid at the presence of man, and to be shy when he addresses her. Learn, O virgin, to avoid light talking. Mary feared even the salutation of an angel.

Greek Expositor. (sup.) But as she might be accustomed to these visions, the Evangelist ascribes her agitation not to the vision, but to the things told her, saying, *she was troubled at his words.* Now observe both the modesty and wisdom of the Virgin; the soul, and at the same time the voice. When she heard the joyful words, she pondered them in her mind, and neither openly resisted through unbelief, nor forthwith lightly complied; avoiding equally the inconstancy of Eve, and the insensibility of Zacharias. Hence it is said, *And she cast in her mind what manner of salutation this was*, it is not said conception, for as yet she knew not the vastness of the mystery. But the salutation, was there aught of passion in it as from a man to a virgin? or was it not of God, seeing that he makes mention of God, saying, *The Lord is with thee.*

Ambrose. She wondered also at the new form of blessing, unheard of before, reserved for Mary alone.

Origen. For if Mary had known that similar words had been addressed to others, such a salutation would never have appeared to her so strange and alarming.

30. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33. And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

When the angel saw that she was troubled at this unusual salutation, calling her by her name as if she was well known to him, he tells her she must not fear, as it follows; *And the angel said, Fear not, Mary.*

Greek Expositor. (Photius.) As if he said, I came not to deceive you, nay rather to bring down deliverance from deception; I came not to rob you of your inviolable virginity, but to open a dwelling-place for the Author and Guardian of thy purity; I am not a servant of the Devil, but the ambassador of Him that destroyeth the Devil. I am come to form a marriage treaty, not to devise plots. So far then was he from allowing her to be harassed by distracting thoughts, lest he should be counted a servant unfaithful to his trust.

Chrysostom. But he who earns favour in the sight of God has nothing to fear. Hence it follows, *For thou hast found favour before God.* But how shall any one find it, except through the means of his humility. *For God giveth grace to the humble.* (James 4:6, 1 Pet. 5:5.)

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) For the Virgin found favour with God, in that decking her own soul in the bright robes of chastity, she prepared a dwelling-place pleasing to God. Not only did she retain her virginity inviolate, but her conscience also she kept from stain. As many had found favour before Mary, he goes on to state what was peculiar to her. *Behold, thou shall conceive in thy womb.*

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) By the word *behold*, he denotes rapidity and actual presence, implying that with the utterance of the word the conception is accomplished.

Greek Expositor. (Sev. Antiochenus.) *Thou shalt conceive in thy womb*, that he might shew that our Lord from the very Virgin's womb, and of our substance, took our flesh upon Him. For the Divine Word came to purify man's nature and birth, and the first elements of our generation. And so without sin and human seed, passing through every stage as we do, He is conceived in the flesh, and carried in the womb for the space of nine months.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) But since it happens also that to the spiritual mind is given in an especial manner to conceive the Divine Spirit, and bring forth the Spirit of salvation, as says the Prophet; therefore he added, *And thou shalt bring forth a Son.* (Is. 26:18.)

Ambrose. But all are not as Mary, that when they conceive the word of the Holy Spirit, they bring forth; for some put forth the word prematurely, others have Christ in the womb, but not yet formed.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. in Diem Nat.) While the expectation of child-birth strikes a woman with terror, the sweet mention of her offspring calms her, as it is added, *And thou shall call his name Jesus.* The coming of the Saviour is the banishing of all fear.

Bede. Jesus is interpreted Saviour, or Healing.

Greek Expositor. (Geom. sup.) And he says, *Thou shalt call*, not His father shall call, for He is without a father as regards His lower birth, as He is without a mother in respect of the higher.

Cyril of Alexandria. (de fide ad Theod.) But this name was given anew to the Word in adaptation to His nativity in the flesh; as that prophecy saith, *Thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord hath named.* (Is. 62:2.)

Greek Expositor. (sup.) But as this name was common to Him with the successor of Moses, the angel therefore implying that He should not be after Joshua's likeness, adds, *He shall be great.* (Josh. 1.)

Ambrose. It was said also of John, that *he shall be great*, but of him indeed as of a great man, of Christ, as of the great God. For abundantly is poured forth the power of God; widely the greatness of the heavenly substance extended, neither confined by place, nor grasped by thought; neither determined by calculation, nor altered by age.

Origen. See then the greatness of the Saviour, how it is diffused over the whole world. Go up to heaven, see there how it has filled the heavenly places; carry thy thoughts down to the deep, behold, there too He has descended. If thou seest this, then, in like manner, beholdest thou fulfilled in very deed, *He shall be great.*

Greek Expositor. (Photius.) The assumption of our flesh does not diminish ought from the loftiness of the Deity, but rather exalts the lowness of man's nature. Hence it follows, *And he shall be called the Son of the Highest.* Not, Thou shalt give Him the name, but He Himself shall be called. By whom, but His Father of like substance with Himself? For no one hath known the Son but the Father. (Matt. 11:27.) But He in Whom exists the infallible knowledge of His Son, is the true interpreter as to the name which should be given Him, when He says, *This is my beloved Son*; (Matt. 17:5.) for such indeed from everlasting He is, though His name was not revealed till now; therefore he says, *He shall be called*, not shall be made or begotten. For before the worlds He was of like substance with the Father. Him therefore thou shalt conceive; His mother thou shalt become; Him shall thy virgin shrine enclose, Whom the heavens were not able to contain.

Chrysostom. (non occ.) But since it seems shocking or unworthy to some men that God should inhabit a body, is the Sun, I would ask, the heat whereof is felt by each body that receives its rays, at all sullied as to its natural purity? Much more then does the Sun of Righteousness, in taking upon Himself a most pure body from the Virgin's womb, escape not only defilement, but even shew forth His own mother in greater holiness.

Greek Expositor. (Severus Antiochenus.) And to make the Virgin mindful of the prophets, he adds, *And the Lord God shall give unto him the seat of David*, that she might know clearly, that He Who is to be born of her is that very Christ, Whom the prophets promised should be born of the seed of David.

Cyril of Alexandria. (contra Julian lib. viii.) Not however from Joseph proceeded the most pure descent of Christ. For from one and the same line of connexion had sprung both Joseph and the Virgin, and from this the only-begotten had taken the form of man.

Basil. (Epist. 236. ad Amphil.) Our Lord sat not on the earthly throne of David, the Jewish kingdom having been transferred to Herod. *The seat of David* is that on which our Lord reestablished His spiritual kingdom which should never be destroyed. Hence it follows, *And he shall reign over the house of Jacob.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. vii. in Matt.) Now He assigns to the present house of Jacob all those who were of the number of the Jews that believed on Him. For as Paul says, *They are not all Israel which are of Israel, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*

Bede. Or by the house of Jacob he means the whole Church which either sprang from a good root, or though formerly a wild olive branch, has yet been for a reward of its faith grafted into the good olive tree. (Rom. 11:17.)

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) But to reign for ever is of none save God alone; and hence though because of the incarnation Christ is said to receive the seat of David, yet as being Himself God He is acknowledged to be the eternal King. It follows, *And, his kingdom shall have no end*, not in that He is God, but in that He is man also. Now indeed He has the kingdom of many nations, but finally he shall reign over all, when all things shall be put under Him. (1 Cor. 15:25.)

Bede. Let Nestorius then cease to say that the Virgin's Son is only man, and to deny that He is taken up by the Word of God into the unity of the Person. For the Angel when he says that the very same has David for His father whom he declares is called the Son of the Highest, demonstrates the one Person of Christ in two natures. The Angel uses the future tense (vocabitur, regnabit) not because, as the Heretics say, *Christ was not before Mary*, but because in the same person, man with God shares the same name of Son.

1:34–35

34. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35. And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Ambrose. It was Mary's part neither to refuse belief in the Angel, nor too hastily take unto herself the divine message. How subdued her answer is, compared with the words of the Priest. *Then said Mary to the Angel, How shall this be?* She says, *How shall this be?* He answers, *Whereby shall I know this?* He refuses to believe that which he says he does not know, and seeks as it were still further authority for belief. She avows herself willing to do that which she doubts not will be done, but how, she is anxious to know. Mary had read, *Behold, she shall conceive and bear a son.* (Is. 7:14.) She believed therefore that it should be, but how it was to take place she had never read, for even to so great a prophet this had not been revealed. So great a mystery was not to be divulged by the mouth of man, but of an Angel.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. in Diem Nat. Christi.) Hear the chaste words of the Virgin. The Angel tells her she shall bear a son, but she rests upon her virginity, deeming her inviolability a more precious thing than the Angel's declaration. Hence she says, *Seeing that I know not a man.*

Basil. (235. Ep. Amph.) Knowledge is spoken of in various ways. The wisdom of our Creator is called knowledge, and an acquaintance with His mighty works, the keeping also of His commandments, and the constant drawing near to Him; and besides these the marriage union is called knowledge, as it is here.

Gregory of Nyssa. (sup.) These words of Mary are a token of what she was pondering in the secrets of her heart; for if for the sake of the marriage union she had wished to be espoused to Joseph, why was she seized with astonishment when the conception was made known unto her? seeing in truth she might herself be expecting at the time to become a mother according to the law of nature. But because it was meet that her body being presented to God as an holy offering-should be kept inviolate, therefore she says, *Seeing that I know not a man.* As if she said, Notwithstanding that thou who speakest art an Angel, yet that I should know a man is plainly an impossible thing. How then can I be a mother, having no husband? For Joseph I have acknowledged as my betrothed.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) But mark, how the Angel solves the Virgin's doubts, and shews to her the unstained marriage and the unspeakable birth. *And the Angel answered, and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 49 in Gen.) As if he said, Look not for the order of nature in things which transcend and overpower nature. Dost thou say, *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* Nay rather, shall it happen to thee for this very reason, that thou hast never known a husband. For if thou hadst, thou wouldest not have been thought worthy of the mystery, not that marriage is unholy, but virginity more excellent. It became the common Lord of all both to take part with us, and to differ with us in His nativity; for the being born from the womb, He shared in common with us, but in that He was born without cohabitation, He was exalted far above us.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. in Diem Nat.) O blessed is that womb which because of the overflowing purity of the Virgin Mary has drawn to itself the gift of life! For in others scarcely indeed shall a pure soul obtain the presence of the Holy Spirit, but in her the flesh is made the receptacle of the Spirit.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Lib. de Vita Moysis.) For the tables of our nature which guilt had broken, the true Lawgiver has formed anew to Himself from our dust without cohabitation, creating a body capable of taking His divinity, which the finger of God hath carved, that is to say, the Spirit coming upon the Virgin.

Gregory of Nyssa. (in Diem Natal.) Moreover, *the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* Christ is the power of the most high King, who by the coming of the Holy Spirit is formed in the Virgin.

Gregory. (18 Moral. c. 20. super Job 27:21.) By the term *overshadowing*, both natures of the Incarnate God are signified. For shadow is formed by light and matter. But the Lord by His Divine nature is light. Because then immaterial light was to be embodied in the Virgin's womb, it is well said unto her, *The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*, that is, the human body in thee shall receive an immaterial light of divinity. For this is said to Mary for the heavenly refreshing of her soul.

Bede. Thou shalt conceive then not by the seed of man whom thou knowest not, but by the operation of the Holy Spirit, with which thou art filled. There shall be no flame of desire in thee when the Holy Spirit shall overshadow thee.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. in Diem Nat.) Or he says, *overshadow thee*, because as a shadow takes its shape from the character of those bodies which go before it, so the signs of the Son's Deity will appear from the power of the Father. (non occ. in Greg. Nyss.). For as in us a certain life-giving power is seen in the material substance, by which man is formed; so in the Virgin, has the power of the Highest in like manner, by *the life-giving Spirit*, taken from the Virgin's body a fleshly substance inherent in the body to form a new man. Hence it follows, *Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee.*

Athanasius. (Ep. ad Epictetum.) For we confess that which then was taken up from Mary to be of the nature of man and a most real body, the very same also according to nature with our own body. For Mary is our sister, seeing we have all descended from Adam.

Basil. (Lib. de Spirit. Sanct. c. v.) Hence also, St. Paul says, *God sent forth his Son, born* not (through a woman) but *of a woman*. For the words through a woman might convey only a notion of birth as a passing through, but when it is said, *of a woman*, (Gal. 4:4.) there is openly declared a communion of nature between the son and the parent.

Gregory. (18 Moral. c. 52. super Job 28:19.) To distinguish His holiness from ours, Jesus is stated in an especial manner to be born holy. For we although indeed made holy, are not born so, for we are constrained by the very condition of our corruptible nature to cry out with the Prophet, *Behold, I was conceived in iniquity.* (Ps. 51:5.) But He alone is in truth holy, who was not conceived by the cementing of a fleshly union, nor as the heretics rave, one person in His human nature, another in His divine; not conceived and brought forth a mere man, and afterwards by his merits, obtained that He should be God, but the Angel announcing and the Spirit coming, first the Word in the womb, afterwards within the womb the Word made flesh. Whence it follows, *Shall be called the Son of God.*

Greek Expositor. (Victor Presbyter.) But observe, how the Angel has declared the whole Trinity to the Virgin, making mention of the Holy Spirit, the Power, and the Most High, for the Trinity is indivisible. [c]

1:36–38

36. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37. For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Chrysostom. (49 in Gen.) Seeing that his previous words had overcome the mind of the virgin, the angel drops his discourse to a humbler subject, persuading her by reference to sensible things. Hence he says, *And, behold, Elisabeth thy cousin*, &c. Mark the discretion of Gabriel; he did not remind her of Sarah, or Rebecca, or Rachel, because they were examples of ancient times, but he brings forward a recent event, that he might the more forcibly strike her mind. For this reason also he noticed the age, saying, *She also hath conceived a son in her old age*; and the natural infirmity also. As it follows, *And this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.* For not immediately at the beginning of Elisabeth's conception did he make this announcement, but after the space of six months, that the swelling of her womb might confirm its truth.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Carm. 18. de Geneal. Christi.) But some one will ask, How is Christ related to David, since Mary sprang from the blood of Aaron, the angel having declared Elisabeth to be her kinswoman? But this was brought about by the Divine counsel, to the end that the royal race might be united to the priestly stock; that Christ, Who is both King and Priest, might be descended from both according to the flesh. For it is written, that Aaron, the first High Priest according to the law, took from the tribe of Judah for his wife Elisabeth, the daughter of Aminadab. (Exod. 6:23.) And observe the most holy administration of the Spirit, in ordering that the wife of Zacharias should be called Elisabeth, so bringing us back to that Elisabeth whom Aaron married.

Bede. So it was then, lest the virgin should despair of being able to bear a son, that she received the example of one both old and barren about to bring forth, in order that she might learn that all things are possible with God, even those which seem to be opposed to the order of nature. Whence it follows, *For there shall be no word* (verbum) *impossible with God.*

Chrysostom. For the Lord of nature can do all things as He will, Who executes and disposes all things, holding the reins of life and death.

Augustine. (contra Faust. l. xxvi. c. 5.) But whoever says, "If God is omnipotent, let Him cause those things which have been done to have not been done," does not perceive that he says, "Let Him cause those things which are true, in that very respect in which they are true to be false." For He may cause a thing not to be which was, as when He makes a man who began to be by birth, not to be by death. But who can say that He makes not to be that which no longer is in being? For whatever is past is no longer in being. But if aught can happen to a thing, that thing is still in being to which any thing happens, and if it is, how is it past? Therefore that is not in being which we have truly said has been, because the truth is, in our opinions, not in that thing which no longer is. But this opinion God can not make false; and we do not so call God omnipotent as supposing also that He could die. He plainly is alone truly called omnipotent, who truly is, and by whom alone that is, whatever in any wise exists, whether spirit or body.

Ambrose. Behold now the humility, the devotion of the virgin. For it follows, *But Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* She calls herself His handmaid, who is chosen to be His mother, so far was she from being exalted by the sudden promise. At the same time also by calling herself handmaid, she claimed to herself in no other way the prerogative of such great grace than that she might do what was commanded her. For about to bring forth One meek and lowly, she was bound herself to shew forth lowliness. As it follows, *Be it unto me according to thy word.* You have her submission, you see her wish. *Behold the handmaid of the Lord*, signifies the readiness of duty. *Be it unto me according to thy word*, the conception of the wish.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) Some men will highly extol one thing, some another, in these words of the virgin. One man, for example, her constancy, another her willingness of obedience; one man her not being tempted by the great and glorious promises of the great archangel; another, her self-command in not giving an instant assent, equally avoiding both the heedlessness of Eve and the disobedience of Zacharias. But to me the depth of her humility is an object no less worthy of admiration

Gregory. (sup.) Through an ineffable sacrament of a holy conception and a birth inviolable, agreeable to the truth of each nature, the same virgin was both the handmaid and mother of the Lord.

Bede. Having received the consent of the virgin, the angel soon returns heavenward, as it follows, *And the angel departed from her.*

Eusebius. (vel Geometer.) Not only having obtained what he wished, but wondering at her virgin beauty, and the ripeness of her virtue.

1:39–45

39. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

40. And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

42. And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44. For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

Ambrose. The Angel, when he announced the hidden mysteries to the Virgin, that he might build up her faith by an example, related to her the conception of a barren woman. When Mary heard it, it was not that she disbelieved the oracle, or was uncertain about the messenger, or doubtful of the example, but rejoicing in the fulfilment of her wish, and consicentious in the observance of her duty, she gladly went forth into the hill country. For what could Mary now, filled with God, (plena Deo) but ascend into the higher parts with haste!

Origen. For Jesus who was in her womb hastened to sanctify John, still in the womb of his mother. Whence it follows, *with haste.*

Ambrose. The grace of the Holy Spirit knows not of slow workings. Learn, ye virgins, not to loiter in the streets, nor mix in public talk.

Theophylact. She went into the mountains, because Zacharias dwelt there. As it follows, *To a city of Juda, and entered into the house of Zacharias.* Learn, O holy women, the attention which ye ought to shew for your kinswomen with child. For Mary, who before dwelt alone in the secret of her chamber, neither virgin modesty caused to shrink from the public gaze, nor the rugged mountains from pursuing her purpose, nor the tediousness of the journey from performing her duty. Learn also, O virgins, the lowliness of Mary. She came a kinswoman to her next of kin, the younger to the elder, nor did she merely come to her, but was the first to give her salutations; as it follows, *And she saluted Elisabeth.* For the more chaste a virgin is, the more humble she should be, and ready to give way to her elders. Let her then be the mistress of humility, in whom is the profession of chastity. Mary is also a cause of piety, in that the higher went to the lower, that the lower might be assisted, Mary to Elisabeth, Christ to John.

Chrysostom. (Hom. iv. in Matt.) Or else the Virgin kept to herself all those things which have been said, not revealing them to any one, for she did not believe that any credit would be given to her wonderful story; nay, she rather thought she would suffer reproach if she told it, as if wishing to screen her own guilt.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) But to Elisabeth alone she has recourse, as she was wont to do from their relationship, and other close bonds of union.

Ambrose. But soon the blessed fruits of Mary's coming and our Lord's presence are made evident. For it follows, *And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb.* Mark the distinction and propriety of each word. Elisabeth first heard the word, but John first experienced the grace. She heard by the order of nature, he leaped by reason of the mystery. She perceived the coming of Mary, he the coming of the Lord.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) For the Prophet sees and hears more acutely than his mother, and salutes the chief of Prophets; but as he could not do this in words, he leaps in the womb, which was the greatest token of his joy. Who ever heard of leaping at a time previous to birth? Grace introduced things to which nature was a stranger. Shut up in the womb, the soldier acknowledged his Lord and King soon to be born, the womb's covering being no obstacle to the mystical sight.

Origen. (vid. etiam Tit. Bos.) He was not filled with the Spirit, until she stood near him who bore Christ in her womb. Then indeed he was both filled with the Spirit, and leaping imparted the grace to his mother; as it follows, *And Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.* But we cannot doubt that she who was then filled with the Holy Spirit, was filled because of her son.

Ambrose. She who had hid herself because she conceived a son, began to glory that she carried in her womb a prophet, and she who had before blushed, now gives her blessing; as it follows, *And she spake out with a loud voice, Blessed art thou among women.* With a loud voice she exclaimed when she perceived the Lord's coming, for she believed it to be a holy birth. But she says, *Blessed art thou among women.* For none was ever partaker of such grace or could be, since of the one Divine seed, there is one only parent.

Bede. Mary is blessed by Elisabeth with the same words as before by Gabriel, to shew that she was to be reverenced both by men and angels.

Theophylact. But because there have been other holy women who yet have borne sons stained with sin, she adds, *And blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* Or another interpretation is, having said, *Blessed art thou among women*, she then, as if some one enquired the cause, answers, *And blessed is the fruit of thy womb*: as it is said, *Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord. The Lord God, and he hath shewed us light*; (Ps. 118:26, 27.) for the Holy Scriptures often use *and*, instead of *because*.

Titus Bostrensis. Now she rightly calls the Lord the fruit of the virgin's womb, because He proceeded not from man, but from Mary alone. For they who are sown by their fathers are the fruits of their fathers.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) This fruit alone then is blessed, because it is produced without man, and without sin.

Bede. This is the fruit which is promised to David, *Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.* (Ps. 132:11.)

Greek Ex. (Severus.) From this place we derive the refutation of Eutyches, in that Christ is stated to be the fruit of the womb. For all fruit is of the same nature with the tree that bears it. It remains then that the virgin was also of the same nature with the second Adam, who takes away the sins of the world. But let those also who invent curious fictions concerning the flesh of Christ, blush when they hear of the real child-bearing of the mother of God. For the fruit itself proceeds from the very substance of the tree. Where too are those who say that Christ passed through the virgin as water through an aqueduct? Let these consider the words of Elisabeth who was filled with the Spirit, that Christ was *the fruit of the womb*. It follows, *And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?*

Ambrose. She says it not ignorantly, for she knew it was by the grace and operation of the Holy Spirit that the mother of the prophet should be saluted by the mother of his Lord, to the advancement and growth of her own pledge; but being aware that this was of no human deserving, but a gift of Divine grace, she therefore says, *Whence is this to me*, that is, By what right of mine, by what that I have done, for what good deeds?

Origen. (non occ. vide Theoph. et. Tit. Bost.) Now in saying this, she coincides with her son. For John also felt that he was unworthy of our Lord's coming to him. But she gives the name of "the mother of our Lord" to one still a virgin, thus forestalling the event by the words of prophecy. Divine foreknowledge brought Mary to Elisabeth, that the testimony of John might reach the Lord. For from that time Christ ordained John to be a prophet. Hence it follows, *For, to, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded, &c.*

Augustine. (Epist. ad Dardanum 57.) But in order to say this, as the Evangelist has premised, she was filled with the Holy Spirit, by whose revelation undoubtedly she knew what that leaping of the child meant; lamely, that the mother of Him had come unto her, whose forerunner and herald that child was to be. Such then night be the meaning of so great an event; to be known indeed by grown up persons, but not understood by a little child; for she said not, "The babe leaped in faith in my womb," but *leaped for joy*. Now we see not only children leaping for joy, but even the cattle; not surely from any faith or religious feeling, or any rational knowledge. But this joy was strange and unwonted, for it was in the womb; and at the coming of her who was to bring forth the Saviour of the world. This joy, therefore, and as it were reciprocal salutation to the mother of the Lord, was caused (as miracles are) by Divine influences in the child, not in any human way by him. For even supposing the exercise of reason and the will had been so far advanced in that child, as that he should be able in the bowels of his mother to know, believe, and assent; yet surely that must be placed among the miracles of Divine power, not referred to human examples.

Theophylact. The mother of our Lord had come to see Elisabeth, as also the miraculous conception, from which the Angel had told her should result the belief of a far greater conception, to happen to herself; and to this belief the words of Elisabeth refer, *And blessed art thou who hast believed, for there shall be a performance of those things which were told thee from the Lord.*

Ambrose. You see that Mary doubted not but believed, and therefore the fruit of faith followed.

Bede. Nor is it to be wondered at, that our Lord, about to redeem the world, commenced His mighty works with His mother, that she, through whom the salvation of all men was prepared, should herself be the first to reap the fruit of salvation from her pledge.

Ambrose. But happy are ye also who have heard and believed, for whatever soul hath believed, both conceives and brings forth the word of God, and knows His works.

Bede. But every soul which has conceived the word of God in the heart, straightway climbs the lofty summits of the virtues by the stairs of love, so as to be able to enter into the city of Juda, (into the citadel of prayer and praise, and abide as it were for three months in it,) to the perfection of faith, hope, and charity.

Gregory. (super Ezech. lib. i. Hom. i. 8.) She was touched with the spirit of prophecy at once, both as to the past, present, and future. She knew that Mary had believed the promises of the Angel; she perceived when she gave her the name of mother, that Mary was carrying in her womb the Redeemer of mankind; and when she foretold that all things would be accomplished, she saw also what was to follow in the future.

1:46

46. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.

Ambrose. As evil came into the world by a woman, so also is good introduced by women; and so it seems not without meaning, that both Elisabeth prophesies before John, and Mary before the birth of the Lord. But it follows, that as Mary was the greater person, so she uttered the fuller prophecy.

Basil. (in Psalm 33) For the Virgin, with lofty thoughts and deep penetration, contemplates the boundless mystery, the further she advances, magnifying God; *And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.*

Greek Expositor. (Athanasius.) As if she said, Marvellous things hath the Lord declared that He will accomplish in my body, but neither shall my soul be unfruitful before God. It becomes me to offer Him the fruit also of my will, for inasmuch as I am obedient to a mighty miracle, am I bound to glorify Him who performs His mighty works in me.

Origen. Now if the Lord could neither receive increase or decrease, what is this that Mary speaks of, *My soul doth magnify* (magnificat) *the Lord?* But if I consider that the Lord our Saviour is the image of the invisible God, and that the soul is created according to His image, so as to be an image of an image, then I shall see plainly, that as after the manner of those who are accustomed to paint images, each one of us forming his soul after the image of Christ, makes it great or little, base or noble, after the likeness of the original; so when I have made my soul great in thought, word, and deed, the image of God is made great, and the Lord Himself, whose image it is, is magnified in my soul.

1:47

47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Basil. (ubi sup.) The first-fruit of the Spirit is peace and joy. Because then the holy Virgin had drunk in all the graces of the Spirit, she rightly adds, *And my spirit hath leaped for joy*. (exultavit.) She means the same thing, soul and spirit. But the frequent mention of leaping for joy in the Scriptures implies a certain bright and cheerful state of mind in those who are worthy. Hence the Virgin exults in the Lord with an unspeakable springing (and bounding) of the heart for joy, and in the breaking forth into utterance of a noble affection. It follows, *in God my Saviour.*

Bede. Because the spirit of the Virgin rejoices in the eternal Godhead of the same Jesus. (i. e. the Saviour,) whose flesh is formed in the womb by a temporal conception.

Ambrose. The soul of Mary therefore magnifies the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God, because with soul and spirit devoted to the Father and the Son, she worships with a pious affection the one God from whom are all things. But let every one have the spirit of Mary, so that he may rejoice in the Lord. If according to the flesh there is one mother of Christ, yet, according to faith, Christ is the fruit of all. For every soul receives the word of God if only he be unspotted and free from sin, and preserves it with unsullied purity.

Theophylact. But he magnifies God who worthily follows Christ, and now that he is called Christian, lessens not the glory of Christ by acting unworthily, but does great and heavenly things; and then the Spirit (that is, the anointing of the Spirit) shall rejoice, (i. e. make him to prosper,) and shall not be withdrawn, so to say, and put to death.

Basil. (ubi sup.) But if at any time light shall have crept into his heart, and loving God and despising bodily things he shall have gained the perfect standing of the just, without any difficulty shall he obtain joy in the Lord.

Origen. But the soul first magnifies the Lord, that it may afterwards rejoice in God; for unless we have first believed, we can not rejoice.

1:48

48. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Greek Expositor. (Isidore.) She gives the reason why it becomes her to magnify God and to rejoice in Him, saying, *For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden*; as if she said, "He Himself foresaw, therefore I did not look for Him." I was content with things lowly, but now am I chosen unto counsels unspeakable, and raised up from the earth unto the stars.

Augustine. (Pseudo-Aug. Serm. de Assumpt 208.) O true lowliness, which hath borne God to men, hath given life to mortals, made new heavens and a pure earth, opened the gates of Paradise, and set free the souls of men. The lowliness of Mary was made the heavenly ladder, by which God descended upon earth. For what does *regarded* mean but "approved?" For many seem in my sight to be lowly, but their lowliness is not regarded by the Lord. For if they were truly lowly, their spirit would rejoice not in the world, but in God.

Origen. But why was she lowly and cast down, who carried in her womb the Son of God? Consider that lowliness, which in the Scriptures is particularly praised as one of the virtues, is called by the philosophers "modestia." And we also may paraphrase it, that state of mind in which a man instead of being puffed up, casts himself down.

Bede. But she, whose humility is *regarded*, is rightly called *blessed* by all; as it follows, *For, behold, from henceforth all shall call me blessed.*

Athanasius. For if as the Prophet says, *Blessed are they who have seed in Sion, and kinsfolk in Jerusalem*, (Isa. 31:9. apud LXX.) how great should be the celebration of the divine and ever holy Virgin Mary, who was made according to the flesh, the Mother of the Word?

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes.) She does not call herself blessed from vain glory, for what room is there for pride in her who named herself the handmaid of the Lord? But, touched by the Holy Spirit, she foretold those things which were to come.

Bede. For it was fitting, that as by the pride of our first parent death came into the world, so by the lowliness of Mary should be opened the entrance into life.

Theophylact. And therefore she says, *all generations*, not only Elisabeth, but also every nation that believed.

1:49

49. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

Theophylact. The Virgin shews that not for her own virtue is she to be pronounced blessed, but she assigns the cause, saying, *For he that is mighty hath magnified me.*

Augustine. (sup.) What great things hath He done unto thee? I believe that a creature thou gavest birth to the Creator, a servant thou broughtest forth the Lord, that through thee God redeemed the world, through thee He restored it to life.

Titus Bostrensis. But where are the great things, if they be not that I still a virgin conceive (by the will of God) overcoming nature? I have been accounted worthy, without being joined to a husband, to be made a mother, not a mother of any one, but of the only-begotten Saviour.

Bede. But this has reference to the beginning of the hymn, where it is said, *My soul doth magnify the Lord.* For that soul can alone magnify the Lord with due praise, for whom he deigus to do mighty things.

Titus Bostrensis. But she says, *that is mighty*, that if men should disbelieve the work of her conception, namely, that while yet a virgin, she conceived, she might throw back the miracles upon the power of the Worker. Nor because the only-begotten Son has come to a woman is He thereby defiled, *for holy is his name.*

Basil. (in Ps. 33.) But holy is the name of God called, not because in its letters it contains any significant power, but because in whatever way we look at God we distinguish his purity and holiness.

Bede. For in the height of His marvellous power He is far beyond every creature, and is widely removed from all the works of His hands. This is better understood in the Greek tongue, in which the very word which means holy, (ἅγιον) signifies as it were to be "apart from the earth."

1:50

50. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.

Bede. Turning from God's special gifts to His general dealings, she describes the condition of the whole human race, *And his mercy is from generation to generation on them that fear him.* As if she said, Not only for me hath He that is mighty done great things, but in every nation he that feareth God is accepted by Him.

Origen. For the mercy of God is not upon one generation, but extends to eternity from generation to generation.

Greek Expositor. (Victor Pres.) According to the mercy which He hath upon generations of generations, I conceive, and He Himself is united to a living body, out of mercy alone undertaking our salvation. Nor is His mercy shewn indiscriminately, but upon those who are constrained by the fear of Him in every nation; as it is said, *upon those who fear him*, that is, upon those who being brought by repentance are turned to faith and renewal for the obstinate unbelievers have by their sin shut against themselves the gate of mercy.

Theophylact. Or by this she means that they who fear shall obtain mercy, both in that generation, (that is, the present world,) and the generation which is to come, (i. e. the life everlasting.) For now they receive a hundred-fold, but hereafter far more. (Matt. 19:29.)

1:51

51. He hath shewed strength with his arm, he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Bede. In describing the state of mankind, she shews what the proud deserve, and what the humble; saying, *He hath shewed strength with his arm, &c.* i. e. with the very Son of God. For as your arm is that whereby you work, so the arm of God is said to be His word by whom He made the world.

Origen. But to those that fear Him, He hath done mighty things with His arm; though thou comest weak to God, if thou hast feared Him thou shalt obtain the promised strength.

Theophylact. For in His arm, that is, His incarnate Son, He hath shewed strength, seeing that nature was vanquished, a virgin bringing forth, and God becoming man.

Greek Expositor. (Photius.) Or she says, *Hath shewed*, for *will shew strength*, not as long ago by the hand of Moses against the Egyptians, nor as by the Angel, (when he slew many thousand of the rebel Assyrians,) nor by any other instrument save His own power, He openly *triumphed*, overcoming *spiritual* (intelligibiles) enemies. Hence it follows, *he hath scattered, &c.* that is to say, every heart that was puffed up and not obedient to His coming He hath laid bare, and exposed the wickedness of their proud thoughts.

Cyril of Jerusalem. But these words may be more appropriately taken to refer to the hostile ranks of the evil spirits. For they were raging on the earth, when our Lord's coming put them to flight, and restored those whom they had bound, to His obedience.

Theophylact. This might also be understood of the Jews whom He scattered into all lands as they are now scattered.

1:52

52. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

Bede. The words, *He hath shewed strength with his arm*, and those which went before, *And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation*, must be joined to this verse by a comma only. For truly through all generations of the world, by a merciful and just administration of Divine power, the proud do not cease to fall, and the humble to be exalted. As it is said, *He hath put down the mighty from their seat, he hath exalted the humble and meek.*

Cyril of Alexandria. The mighty in knowledge were the evil spirits, the Devil, the wise ones of the Gentiles, the Scribes and Pharisees; yet these He hath put down, and raised up those who humbled themselves under the mighty hand of God (1 Pet. 5:6); giving them the power of treading upon serpents and scorpions and every power of the enemy. (Luke 10:19.) The Jews were also at one time puffed up with power, but unbelief slew them, and the mean and lowly of the Gentiles have through faith climbed up to the highest summit.

Greek Expositor. (Macarius ex Serm. 1.) For our understanding is acknowledged to be the judgment-seat of God, but after the transgression, the powers of evil took their seat in the heart of the first man as on their own throne. For this reason then the Lord came and cast out the evil spirits from the seat of our will, and raised up those who were vanquished by devils, purging their consciences, and making their hearts his own dwelling place.

1:53

53. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

Gloss. (non occ.) Because human prosperity seems to consist chiefly in the honours of the mighty and the abundance of their riches, after speaking of the casting down of the mighty, and the exalting of the humble, he goes on to tell of the impoverishing of the rich and the filling of the poor, *He hath filled the hungry, &c.*

Basil. (ubi sup.) These words regulate our conduct even with respect to sensible things, teaching the uncertainty of all worldly possessions, which are as shortlived as the wave which is dashed about to and fro by the violence of the wind. But spiritually all mankind suffered hunger except the Jews; for they possessed the treasures of legal tradition and the teachings of the holy prophets. But because they did not rest humbly on the Incarnate Word, they were sent away empty, carrying nothing with them, neither faith nor knowledge, and were bereft of the hope of good things, being shut out both of the earthly Jerusalem, and the life to come. But those of the Gentiles, who were brought low by hunger and thirst, because they clung to the Lord, were filled with spiritual goods.

Gloss. (ordin.) They also who desire eternal life with their whole soul, as it were hungering after it, shall be filled when Christ shall appear in glory; but they who rejoice in earthly things, shall at the end be sent away emptied of all happiness.

1:54–55

54. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

55. As he spake to our fathers, Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Gloss. (non occ.) After a general mention of the Divine mercy and holiness, the Virgin changes the subject to the strange and marvellous dispensation of the new incarnation, saying, *He hath holpen his servant Israel, &c.* as a physician relieves the sick, becoming visible among men, that He might make Israel (i. e. him who sees God) His servant.

Bede. That is, obedient and humble; for he who disdains to be made humble, cannot be saved.

Basil. (non occ.) For by Israel she means not Israel after the flesh, whom their own title made noble, but the spiritual Israel, which retained the name of faith, straining their eyes to see God by faith.

Theophylact. (vide etiam Tit. Bost.) It might also be applied to Israel after the flesh, seeing that out of that body multitudes believed. But this He did remembering His mercy, for He hath fulfilled what He promised to Abraham, saying, *For in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* (Gen. 12:3.) This promise then the mother of God called to mind, saying, *As he spake to our father Abraham*; (Gen. 17:12.) for it was said to Abraham, *I will place my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an eternal covenant, that I shall be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee.*

Bede. But by seed he means not so much those who are begotten in the flesh, as those who have followed the steps of Abraham's faith, to whom the Saviour's coming was promised for evermore.

Gloss. (ordin.) For this promise of heritage shall not be narrowed by any limits, but to the very end of time there shall never lack believers, the glory of whose happiness shall be everlasting.

1:56

56. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

Ambrose. Mary abode with Elisabeth until she had accomplished the time of her bringing forth; as it is said, *And Mary abode, &c.*

Theophylact. For in the sixth month of the conception of the forerunner, the Angel came to Mary, and she abode with Elisabeth three months, and so the nine months are completed.

Ambrose. Now it was not only for the sake of friendship that she abode so long, but for the increase also of so great a prophet. For if at her first coming the child had so far advanced, that at the salutation of Mary he leaped in the womb, and his mother was filled with the Holy Spirit, how much must we suppose the presence of the Virgin Mary to have added during the experience of so long a time? Rightly then is she represented as having shewn kindness to Elisabeth, and preserved the mystical number.

Bede. For the chaste soul which conceives a desire of the spiritual word must of necessity submit to the yoke of heavenly discipline, and sojourning for the days as it were of three months in the same place, cease not to persevere until it is illuminated by the light of faith, hope, and charity.

Theophylact. But when Elisabeth was going to bring forth, the Virgin departed, as it follows, *And she returned*; or, probably because of the multitude, who were about to assemble at the birth. But it became not a virgin to be present on such an occasion.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes.) For it is the custom for virgins to go away when the pregnant woman brings forth. But when she reached her own home, she went to no other place, but abode there until she knew the time of her delivery was at hand. And Joseph doubting, is instructed by an Angel.

1:57–58

57. Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Ambrose. If you carefully observe, you will find that the word signifying *fulness* is no where used except at the birth of the righteous. Hence it is said, *Now Elisabeth's full time came.* For the life of the righteous hath fulness, but the days of the wicked are empty.

Chrysostom. And for that reason the Lord kept back the delivery of Elisabeth, that her joy might be increased, and her fame the greater. Hence it follows, *And her neighbours and cousins heard, &c.* For they who had known her barrenness were made the witnesses of the Divine grace, and no one seeing the child departed in silence, but gave praise to God, Who had vouchsafed him beyond their expectation.

Ambrose. For the bringing forth of saints causes the rejoicing of many; it is a common blessing; for justice is a public virtue, and therefore at the birth of a just man a sign of his future life is sent beforehand, and the grace of the virtue which is to follow is represented, being foreshadowed by the rejoicing of the neighbours.

1:59–64

59. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60. And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.

63. And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64. And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

Chrysostom. (in Gen. Hom. 39.) The rite of circumcision was first delivered to Abraham as a sign of distinction, that the race of the Patriarch might be preserved in unmixed purity, and so might be able to obtain the promises. But now that the promise of the covenant is fulfilled, the sign attached to it is removed. So then through Christ circumcision ceased, and baptism came in its place; but first it was right that John should be circumcised; as it is said, *And it came to pass, that on the eighth day, &c.* For the Lord had said, *Let the child of eight days be circumcised among you.* (Gen. 17:13.) But this measurement of time I conceive was ordered by Divine mercy for two reasons. First, because in its most tender years the child the more easily bears the cutting of the flesh. Secondly, that from the very operation itself we might be reminded that it was done for a sign; for the young child scarcely distinguishes any of the things that are around him. But after the circumcision, the name was conferred, as it follows, *And they called him.* But this was done because we must first receive the seal of the Lord, then the name of man. Or, because no man except he first cast aside his fleshly lusts, which circumcision signifies, is worthy to have his name written in the book of life.

Ambrose. The holy Evangelist has especially remarked, that many thought the child should be called after his father Zacharias, in order that we might understand, not that any name of his kinsfolk was displeasing to his mother, but that the same word had been communicated to her by the Holy Spirit, which had been foretold by the Angel to Zacharias. And in truth, being dumb, Zacharias was unable to mention his son's name to his wife, but Elisabeth obtained by prophecy what she had not learnt from her husband. Hence it follows, *And she answered, &c.* Marvel not that the woman pronounced the name which she had never heard, seeing the Holy Spirit who imparted it to the Angel revealed it to her; nor could she be ignorant of the forerunner of the Lord, who had prophesied of Christ. And it well follows, *And they said unto her, &c.* that you might consider that the name belongs not to the family, but to the Prophet. Zacharias also is questioned, and signs made to him, as it follows, *And they made signs to the father, &c.* But since unbelief had so bereft him of utterance and hearing, that he could not use his voice, he spoke by his hand-writing, as it follows, *And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John*; that is, we give no name to him who has received his name from God.

Origen. (non occ.) Zacharias is by interpretation "remembering God," but John signifies "pointing to." Now "memory" relates to something absent, "pointing to," to something present. But John was not about to set forth the memory of God as absent, but with his finger to point him out as present, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God.*

Chrysostom. But the name John is also interpreted the grace of God. Because then by the favour of Divine grace, not by nature, Elisabeth conceived this son, they engraved the memory of the benefit on the name of the child.

Theophylact. And because with the mother the dumb father also agreed as to the name of the child, it follows, *And they all marvelled.* For there was no one of this name among their kinsfolk that any one could say that they had both previously determined upon it.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. vi.) The birth of John then broke the silence of Zacharias, as it follows, *And his mouth was opened.* For it were unreasonable when the voice of the Word had come forth, that his father should remain speechless.

Ambrose. Rightly also, from that moment was his tongue loosed, for that which unbelief had bound, faith set free. Let us then also believe, in order that our tongue, which has been bound by the chains of unbelief, may be loosed by the voice of reason. Let us write mysteries by the Spirit if we wish to speak. Let us write the forerunner of Christ, not on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tablets of the heart. For he who names John, prophesies Christ. For it follows, *And he spake, giving thanks.*

Bede. Now in an allegory, the celebration of John's birth was the beginning of the grace of the New Covenant. His neighbours and kinsfolk had rather give him the name of his father than that of John. For the Jews, who by the observance of the Law were united to him as it were *by ties of kindred*, chose rather to follow the righteousness which is of the Law, than receive the grace of faith. But the name of John, (i. e. the grace of God,) his mother in word, his father in writing, suffice to announce, for both the Law itself as well as the Psalms and the Prophecies, in the plainest language foretel the grace of Christ; and that ancient priesthood, by the foreshadowing of its ceremonies and sacrifices, bears testimony to the same. And well doth Zacharias speak on the eighth day of the birth of his child, for by the resurrection of the Lord, which took place on the eighth day, i. e. the day after the sabbath, (septimam sabbati.) the hidden secrets of the legal priesthood were revealed.

1:65–66

65. And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judæa.

66. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Theophylact. As at the silence of Zacharias the people marvelled, so likewise when he spoke. Hence it is said, *And fear came upon all*; that from these two circumstances all might believe there was something great in the child that was born. But all these things were ordained, to the end that he who was to bear witness of Christ might also be esteemed trustworthy. Hence it follows, *And all they that heard them laid them up in their heart, saying, What manner of child, &c.*

Bede. For forerunning signs prepare the way for the forerunner of the truth, and the future prophet is recommended by auspices sent before him; hence it follows, *For the hand of the Lord was with him.*

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes.) For God worked miracles in John which he did not himself, but the right hand of God in him.

Gloss. (ordin.) But mystically, at the time of our Lord's resurrection, by the preaching of the grace of Christ, a wholesome dread shook the hearts not only of the Jews, (who were neighbours, either from the place of their dwelling, or from the knowledge of the law,) but of the foreign nations also. The name of Christ surmounts not only the hilly country of Judæa, but all the heights of worldly dominion and wisdom.

1:67–68

67. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.

Ambrose. God in His mercy and readiness to pardon our sins, not only restores to us what He has taken away, but grants us favours even beyond our expectations. Let no one then distrust Him, let no one from consciousness of past sins despair of the Divine blessing. God knoweth how to change His sentence, if thou hast known how to correct thy sin, seeing he that was long silent prophesies; as it is said, *And Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit.*

Chrysostom. That is, "with the working of the Holy Spirit;" for he had obtained the grace of the Holy Spirit, not in any manner, but fully; and the gift of prophecy shone forth in him; as it follows, *And he prophesied.*

Origen. Now Zacharias being filled with the Holy Spirit utters two prophecies, the first relating to Christ, the second to John. And this is plainly proved by those words in which he speaks of the Saviour as present and already going about in the world, saying, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited, &c.*

Chrysostom. Zacharias, when he is blessing God, says, that He hath visited His people, meaning thereby either the Israelites in the flesh, for *He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*; (Matt. 15:24.) or the spiritual Israel, that is, the faithful, who were worthy of this visitation, making the providence of God of good effect towards them.

Bede. But the Lord visited His people who were pining away as it were from long sickness, and by the blood of His only begotten Son, redeemed them who were sold under sin. Which thing Zacharias, knowing that it would soon be accomplished, relates in the prophetic manner as if it were already passed. But he says, *His people*, not that when He came He found them His own, but that by visiting He made them so.

1:69

69. And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

Theophylact. God seemed to be asleep, disregarding the sins of the multitude, but in these last times coming in the flesh, He hath risen up and trodden down the evil spirits who hated us. Hence it is said, *And he hath raised up an horn of salvation to us in the house of his servant David.*

Origen. Because Christ was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, it is said, *A horn of salvation to us in the house of his servant David*; as it has also elsewhere been said, *A vineyard hath been planted in a horn*, (Is. 5:1.) i. e. in Jesus Christ.

Chrysostom. (Serm. de Anna. IV.) Now by a horn he means power, glory, and honour, deriving it metaphorically from the brute creatures, to whom God has given horns for defence and glory.

Bede. The kingdom of our Saviour Christ is called also the *horn of salvation*, because all our bones are clothed with flesh, but the horn alone stretches beyond the flesh; so the kingdom of Christ is called the horn of salvation, as reaching beyond the world and the delights of the flesh. According to which figure David and Solomon were consecrated by the horn of oil to the glory of the kingdom.

1:70

70. As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets which have been since the world began.

Theophylact. That Christ was born of the house of David, Micah relates, saying, *And thou, Bethlehem, art not the least in the city of Juda, for out of thee shall come a governor who shall rule my people Israel.* (Micah 5:2.) But all the prophets spoke of the Incarnation, and therefore it is said, *As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets.*

Greek Expositor. (Victor Presbyter.) Whereby he means that God spoke through them, and that their speech was not of man.

Bede. But he says, *Which have been since the world began.* Because all the Scriptures of the Old Testament were a constant prophecy of Christ. For both our father Adam himself, and the other fathers, by their deeds bore testimony to His dispensation.

1:71

71. That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.

Bede. Having first briefly said, *He hath raised up a horn of salvation to us*, he goes on to explain his words, adding, *of salvation from our enemies.* As if he said, *He hath raised up to us a horn*, i. e. *He hath raised up to us salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us.*

Origen. Let us not suppose that this refers to our bodily enemies, but our ghostly. For the Lord Jesus came mighty in battle (Ps. 24:8) to destroy all our enemies, that He might deliver us from their snares and temptation.

1:72–74

72. To perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

73. The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74. That he would grant unto us.

Bede. Having announced that the Lord, according to the declaration of the Prophet, would be born of the house of David, he now says, that the same Lord to fulfil the covenant He made with Abraham will deliver us, because chiefly to these patriarchs of Abraham's seed was promised the gathering of the Gentiles, or the incarnation of Christ. But David is put first, because to Abraham was promised the holy assembly of the Church; whereas to David it was told that from him Christ was to be born. And therefore after what was said of David, he adds concerning Abraham the words, *To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, &c.*

Origen. I think that at the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, both Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were partakers of His mercy. For it is not to be believed, that they who had before seen His day, and were glad, should afterwards derive no advantage from His coming, since it is written, *Having made peace through the blood of his Cross, whether in earth or in heaven.* (Coloss. 1:20.)

Theophylact. The grace of Christ extends even to those who are dead, because through Him we shall rise again, not only we, but they also who have been dead before us. He performed His mercy also to our forefathers in fulfilling all their hopes and desires. Hence it follows, *And to remember his holy covenant*, that covenant, namely, wherein he said, *Blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee.* (Gen. 22:17.) For Abraham was multiplied in all nations, who became his children by adoption, through following the example of his faith. But the fathers also, seeing their children enjoy these blessings, rejoice together with them, just as if they received the mercy in themselves. Hence it follows, *The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us.*

Basil. (Hom. in Ps. 29. et in Ps. 14. App. op.) But let no one, hearing that the Lord had sworn to Abraham, be tempted to swear. For as when the wrath of God is spoken of, it does not signify passion but punishment; so neither dos God swear as man, but His word is in very truth expressed to us in place of an oath, confirming by an unchangeable sentence what He promised.

1:74

74. That we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear.

Chrysostom. Having said that a horn of salvation had risen up to us from the house of David, he shews that through it we are partakers of His glory, and escape the assaults of the enemy. As he says, *That being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve him without fear.* The two things above mentioned will not easily be found united. For many escape danger, but fail of a glorious life, as criminals discharged from prison by the king's mercy. On the other hand, some reap glory, but are compelled for its sake to encounter dangers, as soldiers in war embracing a life of honour are oftentimes in the greatest peril. But the horn brings both safety and glory. Safety indeed as it rescues us from the hands of our enemies, not slightly but in a wonderful manner, insomuch that we have no more fear, which are his very words; *that being delivered from the hand of our enemies, we might serve him without fear.*

Origen. Or in another way; Frequently are men delivered from the hands of the enemy, but not without fear. For when fear and peril have gone before, and a man is then plucked from the enemies' hand, he is delivered indeed, but not without fear. Therefore said he, that the coming of Christ caused us to be snatched from the enemies' hands without fear. For we suffered not from their evil designs, but He suddenly parting us from them, hath led us out to our own allotted resting place.

1:75

75. In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

Chrysostom. Zacharias glorifies the Lord, because He hath made us to serve Him with full confidence, not in the flesh as Judah did with the blood of victims, but in the spirit with good works. And this is what he means by *in holiness and righteousness*. For holiness is, a proper observance of our duty towards God, righteousness of our duty towards man; as, for example, when a man devoutly performs the Divine commands, and lives honourably among his fellow men. But he does not say "before men," as of hypocrites desirous to please men, but "before God," as of those *whose praise is not of men, but of God*; (Rom. 2:29.) and this not once or for a time; but all the days of their life, as it is said, *all our days*.

Bede. For whosoever either departs from God's service before he dies, or by any uncleanness stains either the strictness or purity of his faith, or strives to be holy and righteous before men, and not before God, does not yet serve the Lord in perfect freedom from the hand of his spiritual enemies, but after the example of the old Samaritans endeavours to serve equally the Gods of the Gentiles, and his Lord.

1:76

76. And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways.

Ambrose. In prophesying of the Lord he rightly addresses the prophet, shewing that prophecy also is a gift of the Lord, in order that he might not, while enumerating public benefits, seem to be so ungrateful as to be silent of his own. Hence it is said, *And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest*.

Origen. The reason I suppose that Zacharias hastened to speak to his son, was because he knew that John was shortly about to be a sojourner in the wilderness, and that he himself should see him no more.

Ambrose. Now perhaps some may think it an absurd extravagance of the mind to address a child of eight days old. But if we keep our eyes fixed upon higher things, we surely can understand that the son might hear the voice of his father, who before he was born heard the salutation of Mary. The Prophet knew that there were certain organs of hearing in a Prophet which were unclosed by the Spirit of God, not by the growth of the body. He possessed the faculty of understanding who was moved by the feeling of exultation.

Bede. Unless indeed Zacharias be supposed to have wished as soon as he was able to speak, to proclaim for their instruction who were present, the future gifts of his son, which he had long before learnt from the Angel. Let the Arians however hear that our Lord Christ, whom John went before prophesying of Him, Zacharias calls "the Most High," as it is said in the Psalms, *A man was born in her, and the most highest has established her*. (Ps. 87:5.)

Chrysostom. But as kings have their companions in arms, who stand nearest to them, so John, who was the friend of the Bridegroom, went before Him nigh unto His coming. And this is what follows, *For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways*. For some prophets have preached the mystery of Christ at a distance, but he preached it nearer the time, that he might both see Christ, and declare Him to others.

Gregory. (xix. Mor. sup. Job 28:23.) But all they who by preaching cleanse the hearts of their hearers from the filth of their sins, prepare a way for the coming of wisdom into the heart.

1:77

77. To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.

Theophylact. For the manner in which the forerunner prepared the way of the Lord he explains, adding, *To give knowledge of salvation*. The Lord Jesus is salvation, but the knowledge of salvation, i. e. of Christ, was given in John, who bore witness of Christ.

Bede. For as if desiring to explain the name of Jesus, i. e. the Saviour, he frequently makes mention of salvation, but lest men should think it was a temporal salvation which was promised, he adds, *for the forgiveness of sins*.

Theophylact. For in no other way was He known to be God, but as having forgiven the sins of His people. For it is of God alone to forgive sins.

Bede. But the Jews prefer not to receive Christ, but to wait for Antichrist; for they desire to be delivered not from the dominion of sin within, but from the yoke of man's bondage without.

1:78

78.Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us.

Theophylact. Because God hath forgiven our sins not for our works' sake, but through His mercy, it is therefore fitly added, *Through the tender mercy of our God*.

Chrysostom. (Hom. xiv. in Matt.) Which mercy we find not indeed by our own seeking, but God from on high hath appeared to us, as it follows; *Whereby* (i. e. by His tender mercy) *the dayspring from on high* (that is, Christ) *hath visited us*, taking upon Him our flesh.

Greek Expositor. (Severus.) Abiding on high yet present upon the earth, suffering neither division nor limitation, which thing neither can our understanding embrace, nor any power of words express.

1:79

79.To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Bede. Christ is rightly called the Day-spring, because He hath disclosed to us the rising of the true light, as it follows; *To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death*.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) By darkness he means not material darkness, but error and distance from the faith, or ungodliness.

Basil. (sup. Esai. c. ii) For in thick darkness were the Gentile people sitting, who were sunk deep in idolatry, until the rising light dispersed the

darkness, and spread abroad the brightness of truth.

Gregory. (iv. Moral. sup. Job 3:5.) But the shadow of death is taken to mean the forgetfulness of the mind. For as death causes that which it kills to be no longer in life, so whatever oblivion touches ceases to be in the memory. Hence the Jewish people who were forgetful of God are said to sit in the shadow of death. The shadow of death is taken also for the death of the flesh, because as that is the true death, by which the soul is separated from God, so that is the shadow of death by which the flesh is separated from the soul. Hence in the words of the martyrs it is said, *the shadow of death has come over us.* (Ps. 44:19.) By the shadow of death also is represented the following of the devil, who is called *Death* (Rev. 6:8.) in the Revelations, because as a shadow is formed according to the quality of the body, so the actions of the wicked are expressed according to the manner of their following him.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) He rightly says *sitting*, for we were not walking in darkness, but sitting down as having no hope of deliverance.

Theophylact. But not only does the Lord at His rising give light to those who sit in darkness, but he says something further as it follows, *to direct our feet in the way of peace.* The way of peace is the way of righteousness, to which He has directed our feet, i. e. the affections of our souls.

Gregory. (Hom. 33. in Evang.) For we guide our steps in the way of peace, when we walk in that line of conduct wherein we depart not from the grace of our Maker.

Ambrose. Mark also, in how few words Elisabeth prophesies, in how many Zacharias, and yet each spoke filled with the Holy Spirit; but this discipline is preserved, that women may study rather to learn what are the Divine commands than to teach them.

1:80

80. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Bede. The future preacher of repentance, that he might the more boldly reclaim his hearers from the allurements of the world, passes the first part of his life in the deserts. Hence it is said, *And the child grew.*

Theophylact. i. e. in bodily stature, and waxed strong in spirit, for together with his body at the same time his spiritual gift increased, and the workings of the Spirit were more and more manifested in him.

Origen. Or he increased in spirit, remaining not in the same measure in which he had begun, but the Spirit was ever growing in him. His will ever tending to better things, was making its own advances, and his mind ever contemplating something more divine, while his memory was exercising itself, that it might lay up more and more things in its treasury, and more firmly retain them. But he adds, *And he waxed strong.* For human nature is weak, as we learn, *the flesh is weak.* (Matt. 26:41.) It must therefore be made strong by the Spirit, for the Spirit is ready. Many wax strong in the flesh, but the wrestler of God must be strengthened by the Spirit that he may crush the wisdom of the flesh. He retires therefore to escape the noise of cities, and the thronging of the people. For it follows, *And he was in the deserts.* Where the air is purer, the sky more clear, and God a closer friend, that as the time had not yet arrived for his baptism and preaching, he might have leisure for praying, and might hold converse with the angels, calling upon God and fearing Him, saying, *Behold, here am I.*

Theophylact. Or, he was in the deserts that he might be brought up beyond the reach of the malice of the multitude, and not be afraid of man. For if he had been in the world, perchance he had been corrupted by the friendship and conversation of the world. And secondly, that he who was to preach Christ might also be esteemed trust-worthy. But he was hid in the desert until it pleased God to shew him forth to the people of Israel, as it follows, *till the day of his shewing forth to Israel.*

Ambrose. And rightly is the time noted during which the prophet was in the womb, in order that the presence of Mary might not be passed over, while they are silent about the time of his childhood, because being strengthened in the womb by the presence of the Mother of the Lord, he knew not the struggles of childhood.

CHAP. 2

2:1–5

1. And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

2. (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

3. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city.

4. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)

5. To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

Bede. The Son of God, about to be born in the flesh, as by His birth of a virgin He shewed that the grace of virginity was most pleasing in His sight, is therefore begotten in the most peaceful time of the world, because He taught men to seek peace, and condescends to visit those who follow it. But there could be no greater sign of peace than for the whole world to be brought together under one taxing, while its ruler Augustus reigned with so great peace for the twelve years, about the time of our Lord's nativity, that war having been quelled throughout the whole world, there seemed to be a literal fulfilment of the Prophet's prediction, *They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, &c.*

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes et Alexander ander Monachus.) Christ is born also at a time when the princes of Judah had failed, and the kingdom was

transferred to Roman governors, to whom the Jews paid tribute; and then was fulfilled the prophecy, saying, *There shall not fail a leader from Judah, nor a prince from between his feet, until he shall come who is to be sent.* (Gen. 49:10.) And now when Cæsar Augustus was in the 42d year of his reign, there went forth an edict from him that all the world should be taxed for the payment of tribute, the management of which he committed to a certain Cyrinus, whom he made governor of Judæa and Syria; and so it follows, *This taxing was first made, &c.*

Bede. St. Luke points out, that this taxing was either the first of those which comprehended the whole world, for before this very many parts of the earth are often mentioned as having been taxed; or first began at that time when Cyrinus was sent into Syria.

Ambrose. He has rightly added the name of the governor, to mark the course of time. For if the names of the Consuls are affixed to the tables of prices, how much more ought the time to be noted down, of that event which was the redemption of all men?

Bede. Now the registration of property was so appointed by Divine guidance, that every one was ordered to go into his own country, as it follows, *And they all went to be taxed, every one to his own city.* Which so came to pass, in order that the Lord, conceived in one place, born in another, might the more easily escape the fury of the crafty Herod. Hence it follows: *Now Joseph also went up from Galilee.*

Chrysostom. (in diem natal. Christi.) It was the Lord who directed Augustus to give this edict, that he might minister unto the coming of the Only-begotten; for it was this edict that brought Christ's mother into her country as the prophets had foretold, namely, to Bethlehem of Judæa, according to the word, *to a city of David, which is called Bethlehem.*

Greek Expositor. (Irenæus cont. Hær. 1. 3. c. 11.) Now he added, *a city of David*, that he might declare that the promise made by God to David, namely, *that from the fruit of his loins there should go before him a king for ever*, (2 Sam. 7:12.) was already fulfilled. Whence it follows, *Because he was of the house and lineage of David.* (Ps. 132:11.) But since Joseph was of the family of David, it pleased the Evangelist to make known also that the Virgin herself was of the same family, because the Divine law enjoined marriages between those of the same line; and therefore it follows, *With Mary his espoused wife.*

Cyril of Alexandria. (non occ.) It is said that she was espoused, to imply that nothing more than espousals preceded the conception; for it was not by man's seed that the Holy Virgin conceived.

Gregory. (Hom. 8. in Ev.) But the registering of the whole world when our Lord was about to be born was mystical; for He appeared in the flesh Who should write down the names of His own elect in eternity.

Ambrose. There is described a secular registration, implied a spiritual, to be laid before the King not of earth but of Heaven; a registering of faith: a census of souls. For the old census of the Synagogue was abolished, a new census of the Church was preparing. And to decide that the census was not of Augustus, but of Christ, the whole world is ordered to be registered. For who could demand the registration of the whole world but He who had dominion over it, for the earth is not of Augustus, but *the earth is the Lord's?* (Ps. 24:1.)

Bede. And He most perfectly fulfilled what the name Augustus signifies, in that He was both desirous and able to increase (augere) His own.

Theophylact. Because it was fit also that at Christ's coming the worship of many Gods should cease, and one God only be worshipped, one king is described as ruling the world.

Origen. To those who attentively consider it, there seems to be expressed a kind of sacrament, in its being necessary that Christ should be put down in the registration of the whole world; in order that His name being written with all, He might sanctify all, and being placed in the census with the whole world, He might impart to the world the communion of Himself.

Bede. As at that time in the reign of Augustus and under the governorship of Cyrinus, every one went to his own city to make returns of his property; so now when Christ reigns through His teachers (the governors of the Church) ought we to make returns of righteousness.

Ambrose. This was then the first public enrolment of souls to the Lord, to Whom all enrol themselves not at the voice of the crier, but of the Prophet, who says, *O clap your hands, all ye people.* (Ps. 47:1.) But in order that men might know that it was an enrolment of righteousness, there came up to it Joseph and Mary, the just man and the virgin. He who was to be guardian of the Word and she who was to bring it forth.

Bede. Our city and country is the resting-place of the blessed, to which we ought to be travelling with daily increasing virtues. But day by day does Holy Church wait upon her Teacher, and going up from the course of worldly business (which the name of Galilee signifies) to the city of Judah, i. e. the city of confession and praise, make returns of her devotion to the Eternal King. She, after the example of the blessed Virgin Mary, a Virgin has conceived us of the Spirit. Though espoused to another, she is made fruitful by Him; and while visibly joined to the Pontiff who is placed over her, is invisibly filled with the graces of the Spirit. And hence Joseph is well interpreted *increased*, declaring by his very name, that the earnestness of the master speaking is of no avail, except he receive increasing help from above, that he may be heard.

2:6–7

6. And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that, she should be delivered.

7. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

Ambrose. St. Luke has briefly explained the manner, time, and also the place in which Christ was born in the flesh; the manner, that is, in which the espoused has conceived, a virgin has born offspring.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Diem Nat. Christi.) Though coming in the form of man, yet not in every thing is He subject to the laws of man's nature; for while His being born of a woman, tells of human nature; virginity becoming capable of childbirth betokens something above man. Of Him then His mother's burden was light, the birth immaculate, the delivery without pain, the nativity without defilement, neither beginning from wanton desire, nor brought to pass with sorrow. For as she who by her guilt engrafted death into our nature, was condemned to bring forth in trouble, it was meet that she who brought life into the world should accomplish her delivery with joy. But through a virgin's purity He makes His passage into mortal life at a time in which the darkness was beginning to fail, and the vast expanse of night to fade away before the exceeding brightness of the light. For the death of sin had brought an end of

wickedness which from henceforth tends to nothing by reason of the presence of the true light which has illuminated the whole world with the rays of the Gospel.

Bede. He condescended to become incarnate at that time, that after His birth He might be enrolled in Cæsar's taxing, and in order to bring liberty to us might Himself become subject to slavery. It was well also that our Lord was born at Bethlehem, not only as a mark of the royal crown, but on account of the sacrament of the name.

Gregory. (Hom. viii. in Ev.) Bethlehem is by interpretation the house of bread. For it is the Lord Himself who says, *I am the bread of life which came down from heaven.* (John 6:53.) The place therefore where the Lord was born was before called the house of bread, because it was there that He was to appear in His fleshly nature who should refresh the souls of the elect with spiritual fulness.

Bede. But down to the very end of time, the Lord ceases not to be conceived at Nazareth, to be born at Bethlehem, whenever any of His hearers taking of the flour of the word makes himself a house of eternal bread. Daily in the Virgin's womb, i. e. in the mind of believers, Christ is conceived by faith, born by baptism. It follows, *and she brought forth her firstborn son.*

Jerome. (cont. Helvid.) From this Helvidius [d] strives to prove that no one can be called firstborn who has not brothers, as he is called only-begotten who is the only son of his parents. But we thus determine the matter. Every only-begotten is firstborn, not every firstborn is only-begotten. We say not that he is first-begotten whom others follow, but before whom there is no one; (otherwise, supposing there is no firstborn but who has brothers following him, there are then no firstlings due to the priests as long as there are no others begotten;) lest perchance when no birth follows afterward, there should be an only-begotten and not a firstborn.

Bede. He is also only-begotten in the substance of His divinity, firstborn in the taking upon Himself humanity, firstborn in grace, only-begotten in nature.

Jerome. (ubi sup.) Now here was no midwife, no tender anxiety of women; she wrapped the Child up in swaddling clothes, herself both mother and midwife.

Bede. He who clothes the whole world with its varied beauty, is wrapped up in common linen, that we might be able to receive the best robe; He by Whom all things are made, is folded both hands and feet, that our hands might be raised up for every good work, and our feet directed in the way of peace.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes) Oh the wonderful straitening and banishment which He underwent, Who holds the whole world in His hands! From the very beginning He seeks for poverty, and ennobles it in His own person.

Chrysostom. (non occ.) Surely if He had so willed it, He might have come moving the heavens, making the earth to shake, and shooting forth His thunderbolts; but such was not the way of His going forth; His desire was not to destroy, but to save; and to trample upon human pride from its very birth, therefore He is not only man, but a poor man, and has chosen a poor mother, who had not even a cradle where she might lay her new born Child; as it follows, *and she laid him in the manger.*

Bede. He is confined in the narrow space of a rude manger, whose seat is the heavens, that He may give us ample room in the joys of His heavenly kingdom. He Who is the bread of Angels is laid down in a manger, that He might feast us, as it were the sacred animals, with the bread of His flesh.

Cyril of Alexandria. He finds man in his corrupt affections become like the beasts that perish, and therefore He is laid in the manger, in the place of food, that we changing the life of beasts, might be brought to the knowledge that befits man, partaking not of hay, but of the heavenly bread, the lifegiving body.

Bede. He who sits at His Father's right hand, finds no room in an inn, that He might prepare for us in His Father's house many mansions; (John 14:2.) He is born not in His Father's house, but in an inn and by the way side, because through the mystery of the incarnation He was made the way by which to bring us to our country, (where we shall enjoy the truth and the life.) (John 14:6.)

Gregory. (ubi sup.) And that He might shew that on account of the human form which He took upon Him, He was born as in a strange country, not according to His power but according to His nature.

Ambrose. On thy account then am I weak, in Himself is He strong. On thy account am I poor, in Himself is He rich. Consider not what thou seest, but acknowledge that thou art redeemed. I owe more, O Lord Jesus, to Thy sufferings that I am redeemed, than to Thy works that I am created. It were no advantage to be born, had it not advantaged me to be redeemed also.

2:8–12

8. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

10. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

12. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

Ambrose. Observe with what care God builds up our faith. An Angel teaches Mary; an Angel teaches Joseph; an Angel the shepherds also, of whom it is said, *And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field.*

Chrysostom. To Joseph the Angel appeared in a dream, as to one who might be easily brought to believe, but to the shepherds in visible shape as to men of a ruder nature. But the Angel went not to Jerusalem, sought not for Scribes and Pharisees, (for they were corrupt and tormented with envy.) But these were simple men living in the ancient practices of Moses and the Patriarchs. There is a certain road which leads by innocence to Philosophy.

Bede. (Hom. inter Hyem. de Sanctis v.) No where in the whole course of the Old Testament do we find that the Angels who so constantly appear to the Patriarchs, came with light. This privilege was rightly kept for this time when there arose in the darkness a light to them that were true of heart. Hence it

follows, *and the glory of God shone round about them.* (Ps. 112:4.) He is sent forth from the womb, but He shines from heaven. He lies in a common inn, but He lives in celestial light.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) They were alarmed at the miracle, as it follows, *And they were afraid, &c.* But the Angel dispels their rising fears. He not only soothes their terrors, but pours gladness into their hearts; for it follows, *For, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, &c.* not to the Jewish people only, but to all. The cause of their joy is declared; the new and wonderful birth is made manifest by the very names. It follows, *For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.* The first of these, i. e. the Saviour, has reference to the action, the third, i. e. the Lord, to the dignity of the person.

Cyril of Alexandria. But that which is in the middle, namely, Christ, has reference to the adoration, and signifies not the nature, but the compound substance of two natures. For on Christ our Saviour we confess the anointing to have been performed, not however figuratively, (as formerly on kings by the oil,) and as if by prophetic grace, nor for the accomplishment of any work, as it is said in Isaiah, *Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus*; (Isa. 45.) who although he was an idolater was said to be *anointed*, that he might by the decree of Heaven take possession of the whole province of Babylon; but the Saviour as man in the form of a servant, was anointed by the Holy Spirit, as God He Himself by His Holy Spirit anoints those that believe on Him.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer) He marks the time of our Lord's nativity, when he says, *To-day*, and the place when he adds, *In the city of David*; and the signs thereof when it follows, *And there shall be a sign, &c.* Now the Angels bring tidings to the shepherds of the Chief Shepherd, as of a lamb discovered and brought up in a cave.

Bede. The infancy of the Saviour was impressed upon us, both by frequent heraldings of Angels and testimonies of Evangelists, that we might be the more deeply penetrated in our hearts by what has been done for us. And we may observe, that the sign given us of the newborn Saviour was, that He would be found not clothed in Tyrian purple, but wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, not laying on gilded couches, but in a manger.

Maximus. (in Serm. Nativ. 4.) But if perhaps the swaddling clothes are mean in thy eyes, admire the Angels singing praises together. If thou despisest the manger, raise thy eyes a little, and behold the new star in heaven proclaiming to the world the Lord's nativity. If thou believest the mean things, believe also the mighty. If thou disputest about those which betoken His lowliness, look with reverence on what is high and heavenly.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) It was in a mystery that the Angel appeared to the shepherds while they were watching, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, implying that they are thought worthy above the rest to see sublime things who take a watchful care of their faithful flocks; and while they themselves are piously watching over them, the Divine grace shines widely round about them.

Bede. (Home. ubi sup.) For in a mystery, those shepherds, and their flocks, signify all teachers and guides of faithful souls. The night in which they were keeping watch over their flocks, indicates the dangerous temptations from which they never cease to keep themselves, and those placed under their care. Well also at the birth of our Lord do shepherds watch over their flocks; for He was born who says, *I am the good Shepherd*: (John 10:11, 16.) but the time also was at hand in which the same Shepherd was to recal His scattered sheep to the pastures of life.

Origen. But if we would rise to a more hidden meaning, I should say, that there were certain shepherd angels, who direct the affairs of men, and while each one of them was keeping his watch, an angel came at the birth of the Lord, and announced to the shepherds that the true Shepherd had arisen. For Angels before the coming of the Saviour could bring little help to those entrusted to them, for scarcely did one single Gentile believe in God. But now whole nations come to the faith of Jesus.

2:13–14

13. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

14. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Bede. Lest the authority of a single Angel should appear small, as soon as one had revealed the sacrament of the new birth, straightway there was present a multitude of the heavenly host. Rightly has the attending Chorus of Angels received the name of heavenly host, seeing they both humbly bring their aid to that Leader mighty in battle, Who has appeared to put down the powers of the air, and also themselves by their celestial arms bravely vanquish those opposing powers lest they should prevail as they wish in tempting men. But because He is both God and man, rightly do they sing Peace to men and Glory to God. As it follows, *Praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest.* As soon as one Angel, one messenger, had brought the good tidings that God was born in the flesh, the multitude of the heavenly host broke forth in the praise of the Creator, in order both to fix. their devotion on Christ, and to instruct us by their example, that as often as any of the brethren shall sound forth the word of sacred learning, or we ourselves shall have brought these holy things home to our minds, we should with our whole heart, our mouths and hands, return praise to God.

Chrysostom. Of old, indeed, Angels were sent to punish, as, for instance to the Israelites, to David, to the men of Sodom, to the valley of weeping. (Bochim. Judges 2:1.) Now on the other hand they sing the song of thanksgiving to God: because He hath revealed to them His coming down to men.

Gregory. (28. Moral. sup. Job 38:7.) At the same time they also give praises because their voices of gladness accord well with our redemption, and while they behold our acceptance, they rejoice also that their number is completed.

Bede. They wish also peace to men, as they add, *On earth peace to men*, because those whom they had before despised as weak and abject, now that our Lord has come in the flesh they esteem as friends.

Cyril of Alexandria. This peace has been made through Christ, for He has reconciled us by Himself to God and our Father, (2 Cor. 5:18, 19, Eph. 2:16, Col. 1:20.) having taken away our guilt, which was the ground of offence also. He has united two nations in one man, and has joined the heavenly and the earthly in one flock.

Bede. For whom they ask peace is explained in the words, *Of good will.* For them, namely, who receive the new born Christ. For there, is no peace to the ungodly, (Isa. 57:20.) but much peace to them that love the name of God. (Ps. 119:165)

Origen. But the attentive reader will ask, How then does the Saviour say, I *came not to send peace on the earth*, whereas now the Angels' song of His birth is, *On earth peace to men?* It is answered, that peace is said to be to men of goodwill. For the peace which the Lord does not give on the earth is

not the peace of good will.

Augustine. (13. de Trin. cap. 13) For righteousness belongs to good will.

Chrysostom. Behold the wonderful working of God. He first brings Angels down to men, and then brings men up to heaven. The heaven became earth, when it was about to receive earthly things.

Origen. But in a mystery, the Angels saw that they could not accomplish the work committed to them without Him Who was truly able to save, and that their healing fell short of what the care of men required. And so it was as if there should come one who had great knowledge in medicine, and those who before were unable to heal, acknowledging now the hand of a master, grudge not to see the corruptions of wounds ceasing, but break forth into the praises of the Physician, and of that God who sent to them and to the sick a man of such knowledge; the multitudes of the Angels praised God for the coming of Christ.

2:15–20

15. And it came pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

16. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

18. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) The shepherds were filled with astonishment at the things that they saw and heard, and so they left their sheep-folds, and set out by night to Bethlehem, seeking for the light of the Saviour; and therefore it is said, *They spoke one to another, &c.*

Bede. As men who were truly watching, they said not, *Let us see* (*the child*; but) *the word* which has come to pass, i. e. the Word which was from the beginning, let us see how it has been made flesh for us. since this very Word is the Lord. For it follows, *Which the Lord hath made, and has shewn to us*; i. e. Let us see how the Lord hath made Himself, and hath shewn His flesh to us.

Ambrose. How remarkably Scripture weighs the import of each word. For when we behold the flesh of the Lord, we behold the Word, which is the Son. Let not this seem to you a slight example of faith, because of the humble character of the shepherds. For simplicity is sought for, not pride. It follows, *And they came in haste*. For no one indolently seeks after Christ.

Origen. But because they came in haste, and not with loitering steps, it follows, *They found Mary*, (i. e. her who had brought Jesus into the, world,) *and Joseph*, (i. e. the guardian of our Lord's birth,) *and the babe lying in the manger*, (i. e. the Saviour Himself.)

Bede. It seems to succeed in due order, that after having rightly celebrated the incarnation of the Word, we should at length come to behold the actual glory of that Word. Hence it follows: *But when they saw it, they made known the word which had been spoken to them.*

Greek Expositor. (Photius) Beholding with hidden faith indeed the happy events which had been told them, and not content with marvelling at the reality of those things which at the very first they saw and embraced when the Angel told them, they began to relate them not only to Mary and Joseph, but to the others also, (and what is more they impressed them on their minds,) as it follows, *And all who heard it marvelled*. For how could it be otherwise, at the sight of one of the heavenly host upon earth, and earth in peace reconciled to heaven; and that ineffable Child binding together in one, by His divinity, heavenly things, by His humanity, earthly things, and by this conjunction of Himself effecting a wonderful union!

Gloss. Not only do they marvel at the mystery of the incarnation, but also at so wonderful an attestation of the shepherds, men who could not have devised these unheard of things, but were with simple eloquence proclaiming the truth.

Ambrose. Esteem not the words of the shepherds as mean and despicable. For from the shepherds Mary increases her faith, as it follows: *Mary kept all these sayings, and pondered them in her heart*. Let us learn the chastity of the sacred Virgin in all things, who no less chaste in her words than in her body, gathered up in her heart the materials of faith.

Bede. (Hom. ubi sup.) For keeping the laws of virgin modesty, she who had known the secrets of Christ would divulge them to no one, but comparing what she had read in prophecy with what she now acknowledged to have taken place, she did not utter them with the mouth, but preserved them shut up in her heart.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes) Whatever the Angel had said unto her, whatever she had heard from Zacharias, and Elisabeth, and the shepherds, she collected them all in her mind, and comparing them together, perceived in all one harmony. Truly, He was God who was born from her.

Athanasius. (non occ.) But every one rejoiced in the nativity of Christ, not with human feelings, as men are wont to rejoice when a son is born, but at the presence of Christ and the lustre of the Divine light. As it follows: *And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for every thing they had heard, &c.*

Bede. That is to say, from the Angels, and had seen, i. e. in Bethlehem, as it was told them, i. e. they glory in this, that when they came they found it even as it was told them, or as it was told them they give praise and glory to God. For this they were told by the Angels to do, not in very word commanding them, but setting before them the form of devotion when they sung glory to God in the highest.

Bede. (Hom. ubi sup.) To speak in a mystery, let the shepherds of spiritual flocks, (nay, all the faithful,) after the example of these shepherds, go in thought even to Bethlehem, and celebrate the incarnation of Christ with due honours. Let us go indeed casting aside all fleshly lusts, with the whole

desire of the mind even to the heavenly Bethlehem, (i. e. the house of the living bread,) that He whom they saw crying in the manger we may deserve to see reigning on the throne of His Father. And such bliss as this is not to be sought for with sloth and idleness, but with eagerness must we follow the footsteps of Christ. When they saw Him they knew Him; and let us haste to embrace in the fulness of our love those things which were spoken of our Saviour, that When the time shall come that we shall see with perfect knowledge we may be able to comprehend them.

Bede. Again, the shepherds of the Lord's flock by contemplating the life of the fathers who went before them, (which preserved the bread of life,) enter as it were the gates of Bethlehem, and find therein none other than the virgin beauty of the Church, that is, Mary; the manly company of spiritual doctors, that is, Joseph; and the lowly coming of Christ contained in the pages of Holy Scripture, that is, the infant child Christ, laid in the manger.

Origen. That was the manger which Israel knew not, according to those words of Isaiah, *The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib.* (Isa. 3:1.)

Bede. (Hom. ubi sup.) The shepherds did not hide in silence what they knew, because to this end have the Shepherds of the Church been ordained, that what they have learned in the Scriptures they might explain to their hearers.

Bede. (in loc.) The masters of the spiritual flocks also, while others sleep, at one time by contemplation enter into the heavenly places, at another time pass around them by seeking the examples of the faithful, at another time by teaching return to the public duties of the pastoral office.

Bede. (Hom. ubi sup.) Every one of us, even he who is supposed to live as a private person, exercises the office of shepherd, if, keeping together a multitude of good actions and pure thoughts, he strive to rule them with due moderation, to feed them with the food of the Scriptures, and to preserve them against the snares of the devil.

2:21

21. And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Bede. (ubi sup.) Having related our Lord's nativity, the Evangelist adds, *And after that eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child.*

Ambrose. Who is this Child, but He of whom it was said, *Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given?* (Is. 9:6, Gal. 4:5.) For He was made under the law, that He might redeem them who were under the law.

Epiphanius. (lib. i. Hær. 30.) Now the followers of Ebion and Cerinthus say [e], "It is enough for a disciple if he be as his Master. But Christ circumcised Himself. Be thou therefore circumcised." But herein do they deceive themselves, destroying their own principles; for if Ebion should confess that Christ as God descended from heaven and was circumcised on the eighth day, it might then afford the ground of an argument for circumcision; but since he affirms Him to be mere man, surely as a boy he cannot be the cause of Himself being circumcised, as neither are infants the authors of their own circumcision. But we confess that it is God Himself who has descended from heaven, and that inclosed in a virgin's womb, He abode there the whole time necessary for her delivery, until He should perfectly form to Himself of the virgin's womb a human body; and that in this body He was not in appearance but truly circumcised on the eighth day, in order that the figures having come to this spiritual fulfilment, both by Himself and His disciples, might now be spread abroad no longer the figures but the reality.

Origen. As we have died with Him at His death, and risen together with Him at His resurrection, so with Him have we been circumcised, and therefore need not now circumcision in the flesh.

Epiphanius. (ubi sup.) Christ was circumcised for several reasons. First indeed to shew the reality of His flesh, in opposition to Manichæus [f] and those who say that He came forth in appearance only. Secondly, that He might prove that His body was not of the same substance with the Deity, according to Apollinaris, and that it descended not from heaven, as Valentinian said. Thirdly, to add a confirmation to circumcision which He had of old instituted to wait His coming. Lastly, to leave no excuse to the Jews. For had He not been circumcised, they might have objected that they could not receive Christ uncircumcised.

Bede. He was circumcised also that He might enjoin upon us by His example the virtue of obedience, and might take compassion on them who being placed under the law, were unable to bear the burdens of the law, to the end that He who came in the likeness of sinful flesh might not reject the remedy with which sinful flesh was wont to be healed. For circumcision brought in the law the same assistance of a saving cure to the wound of original sin which Baptism does in the time of the grace of revelation, except that as yet the circumcised could not enter the gates of the heavenly kingdom, but comforted after death with a blessed rest in Abraham's bosom, they waited with a joyful hope for their entrance into eternal peace.

Athanasius. (De Sabbato et Circumcisione.) For circumcision expressed nothing else, but the stripping off of the old birth, seeing that part was circumcised which caused the birth of the body. And thus it was done at that time as a sign of the future baptism through Christ. Therefore as soon as that of which it was a sign came, the figure ceased. For since the whole of the old man Adam is taken away by baptism, there remains nothing which the cutting of a part prefigures.

Cyril of Alexandria. It was the custom on the eighth day to perform the circumcision of the flesh. For on the eighth day Christ rose from the dead, and conveyed to us a spiritual circumcision, saying, *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them.* (Matt. 28:19.)

Bede. Now in His resurrection was prefigured the resurrection of each of us both in the flesh and the Spirit, for Christ has taught us by being circumcised that our nature must both now in itself be purged from the stain of vice, and at the last day be restored from the plague of death. And as the Lord rose on the eighth day, i. e. the day after the seventh, (which is the Sabbath,) so we also after six ages of the world and after the seventh, which is the rest of souls, and is now carrying on in another life, shall rise as on the eighth day.

Cyril of Alexandria. But according to the command of the law, on the same day He received the imposition of a name, as it follows, *His name was called Jesus*, which is interpreted Saviour. For He was brought forth for the salvation of the whole world, which by His circumcision He prefigured, as the Apostle says to the Colossians, "Ye are circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the stripping off of the body of the flesh, to wit, the circumcision of Christ." (Col. 2:11.)

Bede. That upon the day of His circumcision He also received the imposition of the name was likewise done in imitation of the old observances. For Abraham, who received the first *sacrament* (Gen. 17:5.) of circumcision, was on the day of his circumcision thought worthy to be blessed by the increase of his name.

Origen. But the name of Jesus, a glorious name and worthy of all honour, a name which is above every other, ought not first to be uttered by men, nor by them be brought into the world. Therefore significantly the Evangelist adds, *which was called of the Angel, &c.*

Bede. Of this name the elect also in their spiritual circumcision rejoice to be partakers, that as from Christ they are called Christians, so also from the Saviour they may be called saved, which title was given them of God not only before they were conceived through faith in the womb of the Church, but even before the world began.

2:22–25

22. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

23. (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

25. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

Cyril of Alexandria. Next after the circumcision they wait for the time of purification, as it is said, *And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were come.*

Bede. If you diligently examine the words of the law, you will find indeed that the mother of God as she is free from all connexion with man, so is she exempt from any obligation of the law. For not every woman who brings forth, but she who has received seed and brought forth, is pronounced unclean, and by the ordinances of the law is taught that she must be cleansed, in order to distinguish probably from her who though a virgin has conceived and brought forth. But that we might be loosed from the bonds of the law, as did Christ, so also Mary submitted herself of her own will to the law.

Titus Bostrensis. Therefore the Evangelist has well observed, that the days of her purification were come according to the law, who since she had conceived of the Holy Spirit, was free from all uncleanness. It follows, *They brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.* [g]

Athanasius. But when was the Lord hid from His Father's eye, that He should not be seen by Him, or what place is excepted from His dominion, that by remaining there He should be separate from His Father, unless brought to Jerusalem and introduced into the temple? But for us perhaps these things were written. For as not to confer grace on Himself was He made man and circumcised in the flesh, but to make us Gods through grace, and that we might be circumcised in the Spirit, so for our sakes is He presented to the Lord, that we also might learn to present ourselves to the Lord.

Bede. On the thirty-third day after His circumcision He is presented to the Lord, signifying in a mystery that no one but he who is circumcised from his sins is worthy to come into the Lord's sight, that no one who has not severed himself from all human ties can perfectly enter into the joys of the heavenly city. It follows, *As it is written in the law of the Lord.*

Origen. Where are they who deny that Christ proclaimed in the Gospel the law to be of God, or can it be supposed that the righteous God made His own Son under a hostile law which He Himself had not given? It is written in the law of Moses as follows, *Every male which openeth the womb shall be called holy unto the Lord.* (Ex. 13:2, 12.)

Bede. By the words, *opening the womb*, he signifies the first-born both of man and beast, and each one of which was, according to the commandment, to be called holy to the Lord, and therefore to become the property of the priest, that is, so far that he was to receive a price for every first-born of man, and oblige every unclean animal to be ransomed.

Gregory of Nyssa. (in Hom. de occursu Domini.) Now this commandment of the law seems to have had its fulfilment in the incarnate God, in a very remarkable and peculiar manner. For He alone, ineffably conceived and incomprehensibly brought forth, opened the virgin's womb, till then unopened by marriage, and after this birth miraculously retaining the seal of chastity.

Ambrose. For no union with man disclosed the secrets of the virgin's womb, but the Holy Spirit infused the immaculate seed into an inviolate womb. He then who sanctified another womb in order that a prophet should be born, He it is who has opened the womb of His own mother, that the Immaculate should come forth. By the words *opening the womb*, he speaks of birth after the usual manner, not that the sacred abode of the virgin's womb, which our Lord in entering sanctified, should now be thought by His proceeding forth from it to be deprived of its virginity.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) But the offspring of this birth is alone seen to be spiritually male, as contracting no guilt from being born of a woman. Hence He is truly called holy, and therefore Gabriel, as if announcing that this commandment belonged to Him only, said, *That Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* Now of other first-borns the wisdom of the Gospel has declared that they are called holy from their being offered to God. But the first-born of every creature, *That holy thing which is born, &c.* the Angel pronounces to be in the nature of its very being holy.

Ambrose. For among those that are born of a woman, the Lord Jesus alone is in every thing holy, who in the newness of His immaculate birth experienced not the contagion of earthly defilement, but by His Heavenly Majesty dispelled it. For if we follow the letter, how can every male be holy, since it is undoubted that many have been most wicked? But He is holy whom in the figure of a future mystery the pious ordinances of the divine law prefigured, because He alone was to open the hidden womb of the holy virgin Church for the begetting of nations.

Cyril of Alexandria. (Hom. xi.) Oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! (Rom. 11:33.) He offers victims, Who in each victim is honoured equally with the Father. The Truth preserves the figures of the law. He who as God is the Maker of the law, as man has kept the law. Hence it follows, *And that they should give a victim as it was ordered in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.* (Lev. 12:8.)

Bede. (Hom. Purif.) Now this was the victim of the poor. For the Lord commanded in the law that they who were able should offer a lamb for a son or a

daughter as well as a turtle dove or pigeon; but they who were not able to offer a lamb should give two turtle doves or two young pigeons. Therefore the Lord, though he was rich, deigned to become poor, that by his poverty He might make us partakers of His riches.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) But let us see what these offerings mean. The turtle dove is the most vocal of birds, and the pigeon the gentlest. And such was the Saviour made unto us; He was endowed with perfect meekness, and like the turtle dove entranced the world, filling [a] His garden with His own melodies. There was killed then either a turtle dove or a pigeon, that by a figure He might be shewn forth unto us as about to suffer in the flesh for the life of the world.

Bede. (ubi sup.) Or the pigeon denotes simplicity, the turtle dove chastity, for the pigeon is a lover of simplicity, and the turtle dove of chastity, so that if by chance she has lost her mate, she heeds not to find another. Rightly then are the pigeon and turtle dove offered as victims to the Lord, because the simple and chaste conversation of the faithful is a sacrifice of righteousness well pleasing to Him.

Athanasius. (ubi sup.) He ordered two things to be offered, because as man consists of both body and soul, the Lord requires a double return from us, chastity and meekness, not only of the body, but also of the soul. Otherwise, man will be a dissembler and hypocrite, wearing the face of innocence to mask his hidden malice.

Bede. (ubi sup.) But while each bird, from its habit of wailing, represents the present sorrows of the saints, in this they differ, that the turtle is solitary, but the pigeon flies about in flocks, and hence the one points to the secret tears of confession, the other to the public assembling of the Church.

Bede. Or the pigeon which flies in flocks sets forth the busy intercourse of active life. The turtle, which delights in solitariness, tells of the lofty heights of the contemplative life. But because each victim is equally accepted by the Creator, St. Luke has purposely omitted whether the turtles or young pigeons were offered for the Lord, that he might not prefer one mode of life before another, but teach that both ought to be followed.

2:25–28

25. And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28. Then took he him up in his arms.

Ambrose. Not only did Angels and Prophets, the shepherds and his parents, bear witness to the birth of the Lord, but the old men and the righteous. As it is said, *And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and he was a just man, and one who feared God.* For scarcely is righteousness preserved without fear, I mean not that fear which dreads the loss of worldly goods, (which perfect love casteth out,) (1 John 4:18) but that holy fear of the Lord which abideth for ever, (Ps. 19:9.) by which the righteous man, the more ardent his love to God, is so much the more careful not to offend Him.

Ambrose. Well is he called righteous who sought not his own good, but the good of his nation, as it follows, *Waiting for the consolation of Israel.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) It was not surely worldly happiness that the prudent Simeon was waiting for as the consolation of Israel, but a real happiness, that is, a passing over to the beauty of truth from the shadow of the law. For he had learnt from the sacred oracles that he would see the Lord's Christ before he should depart out of this present life. Hence it follows, *And the Holy Spirit was in him*, (by which indeed he was justified,) and he received an answer from the Holy Spirit.

Ambrose. He desired indeed to be loosed from the chains of bodily infirmity, but he waits to see the promise, for he knew, *Happy are those eyes which shall see it.* (Job 6.)

Gregory. (Mor. 7.) Hereby also we learn with what desire the holy men of Israel desired to see the mystery of His incarnation.

Bede. To see death means to undergo it, and happy will he be to see the death of the flesh who has first been enabled to see with the eyes of his heart the Lord Christ, having his conversation in the heavenly Jerusalem, and frequently entering the doors of God's temple, that is, following the examples of the saints in whom God dwells as in His temple. By the same grace of the Spirit whereby he foreknew Christ would come, he now acknowledges Him come, as it follows, *And he came by the Spirit into the temple.*

Origen. If thou wilt touch Jesus and grasp Him in thy hands, strive with all thy strength to have the Spirit for thy guide, and come to the temple of God. For it follows, *And when his parents brought in the child Jesus*, (i. e. Mary His mother, and Joseph His reputed father,) *to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) How blessed was that holy entrance to holy things through which he hastened on to the end of life, blessed those hands which handled the word of life, and the arms which were held out to receive Him!

Bede. Now the righteous man, according to the law, received the Child Jesus in his arms, that he might signify that the legal righteousness of works under the figure of the hands and arms was to be changed for the lowly indeed but saving grace of Gospel faith. The old man received the infant Christ, to convey thereby that this world, now worn out as it were with old age, should return to the childlike innocence of the Christian life.

2:28–32

28. ——and blessed God, and said,

29. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

30. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,

31. Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

32. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Origen. If we marvel to hear that a woman was healed by touching the hem of a garment, what must we think of Simeon, who received an Infant in his arms, and rejoiced seeing that the little one he carried was He who had come to let loose the captive! Knowing that no one could release him from the chains of the body with the hope of future life, but He whom he held in his arms. Therefore it is said, *And he blessed God, saying, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart.*

Theophylact. When he says *Lord*, he confesses that He is the very Lord of both life and death, and so acknowledges the Child whom he held in his arms to be God.

Origen. As if he said, "As long as I held not Christ, I was in prison, and could not escape from my bonds."

Basil. (Hom. de grat. act.) If you examine the words of the righteous, you will find that they all sorrow over this world and its mournful delay. *Alas me*! says David, *that my habitation is prolonged.* (Ps. 120:5.)

Ambrose. Observe then that this just man, confined as it were in the prison house of his earthly frame, is longing to be loosed, that he may again be with Christ. (Phil. 1:23.) But whoso would be cleansed, let him come into the temple;—into Jerusalem: let him wait for the Lord's Christ, let him receive in his hands the word of God, and embrace it as it were with the arms of his faith. Then let him depart that he might not see death who has seen life.

Greek Expositor. (Photius.) Simeon blessed God also, because the promises made to him had received their true fulfilment. For He was reckoned worthy to see with his eyes, and to carry in his arms the consolation of Israel. And therefore he says, *According to thy word*, i. e. since I have obtained the completion of thy promises. And now that I have seen with my eyes what was my desire to see, *now lettest thou thy servant depart*, neither dismayed at the taste of death, nor harassed with doubting thoughts: as he adds, *in peace.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) For since Christ has destroyed the enemy, which is sin, and has reconciled us to the Father, the removal of saints has been in peace.

Origen. But who departs from this world in peace, but he who is persuaded that God was *Christ reconciling the world to Himself*, (2 Cor. 5.) who has nothing hostile to God, having derived to himself all peace by good works in himself?

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) But it had been twice promised to him that he should not see death before he should see the Lord's Christ, and therefore he adds, to shew that this promise was fulfilled, *For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) Blessed are the eyes, both of thy soul and thy body. For the one visibly embrace God, but the others not considering those things which are seen, but enlightened by the brightness of the Spirit of the Lord, acknowledge the Word made flesh. For the salvation which thou hast perceived with thy eyes is Jesus Himself, by which name salvation is declared.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) But Christ was the mystery which has been revealed in the last times of the world, having been prepared before the foundation of the world. Hence it follows, *which thou hast prepared before the face of all men.*

Athanasius. (non occ.) That is to say, the salvation wrought by Christ for the whole world. How then was it said above that he was watching for the consolation of Israel, but because he truly perceived in the spirit that consolation would be to Israel at that time when salvation was prepared for all people.

Greek Expositor. (Photius.) Mark the wisdom of the good and venerable old man, who before that he was thought worthy of the blessed vision, was waiting for the consolation of Israel, but when he obtained that which he was looking for, exclaims that he saw the salvation of all people. So enlightened was he by the unspeakable radiance of the Child, that he perceived at a glance things that were to happen a long time after.

Theophylact. By these words, *Before the face*, he signifies that our Lord's incarnation would be visible to all men. And this salvation he says is to be the light of the Gentiles and the glory of Israel, as it follows, *A light to lighten the Gentiles.*

Athanasius. (non occ.) For the Gentiles before the coming of Christ were lying in the deepest darkness, being without the knowledge of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) But Christ coming was made a light to them that sat in darkness, being sore oppressed by the power of the devil, but they were called by God the Father to the knowledge of His Son, Who is the true light.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) Israel was enlightened though dimly by the law, so he says not that light came to them, but his words are, *to be the glory of thy people Israel.* Calling to mind the ancient history, that as of old Moses after speaking with God returned with his face glorious, so they also coming to the divine light of His human nature, casting away their old veil, might be *transformed into the same image from glory to glory* (2 Cor. 3:7.) For although some of them were disobedient, yet a remnant were saved and came through Christ to glory, of which the Apostles were first-fruits, whose brightness illumines the whole world. For Christ was in a peculiar manner the glory of Israel, because according to the flesh He came forth from Israel, although as God He was over all blessed for ever.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) He said therefore, *of thy people*, signifying that not only was He adored by them, but moreover of them was He born according to the flesh.

Bede. And well is the enlightening of the Gentiles put before the glory of Israel, because when the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, then shall Israel be safe. (Rom 11:26.)

2:33–35

33. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35. (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

Greek Expositor. (Photius.) The knowledge of supernatural things, as often as it is brought to the recollection, renews the miracle in the mind, and hence it is said, *His father and mother marvelled at those things which were said of him.*

Origen. Both by the angel and the multitude of the heavenly host, by the shepherds also, and Simeon.

Bede. Joseph is called the father of the Saviour, not because he was (as the Photinians say) His real father, but because from regard to the reputation of Mary, all men considered him so.

Augustine. (de Con. in Evan. ii. 1.) He however might be called His father in that light in which he is rightly regarded as the husband of Mary, that is, not from any carnal connection, but by reason of the very bond of wedlock, a far closer relationship than that of adoption. For that Joseph was not to be called Christ's father was not, because he had not begotten Him by cohabitation, since in truth he might be a father to one whom he had not begotten from his wife, but had adopted from another.

Origen. But they who look deeper into the matter may say, that since the genealogy is deduced from David to Joseph, therefore lest Joseph should seem to be mentioned for no purpose, as not being the father of the Saviour, he was called His father, that the genealogy might maintain its place.

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) Having given praise to God, Simeon now turns to bless them that brought the Child, as it follows, *And Simeon blessed them.* He gave to each a blessing, but his presage of hidden things he imparts only to the mother, in order that in the common blessing He might not deprive Joseph of the likeness of a father, but in what he says to the mother apart from Joseph he might proclaim her to be the true mother.

Ambrose. Behold what abundant grace is extended to all men by the birth of the Lord, and how prophecy is withheld from the unbelievers, not from the righteous. Simeon also prophesies that Christ Jesus has come for the fall and rising again of many.

Origen. They who explain this simply, may say that He came for the fall of unbelievers, and the rising again of believers.

Chrysostom. As the light though it may annoy weak eyes, is still light; in like manner the Saviour endures, though many fall away, for His office is not to destroy; but their way is madness. Wherefore not only by the salvation of the good, but by the scattering of the wicked, is His power shewn. For the sun the brighter it shines, is the more trying to the weak sight.

Gregory of Nyssa. (non occ.) Mark the nice distinction here observed. Salvation is said to be prepared before the face of all people, but the falling and raising is of many; for the Divine purpose was the salvation and sanctification of every one, whereas the falling and lifting up stands in the will of many, believers and unbelievers. But that those who were lying in unbelief should be raised up again is not unreasonable.

Origen. The careful interpreter will say, that no one falls who was not before standing. Tell me then, who were they who stood, for whose fall Christ came?

Gregory of Nyssa. (non occ.) But by this he signifies a fall to the very lowest, as if the punishment before the mystery of the incarnation, fell far short of that after the giving and preaching of the Gospel dispensation. And those spoken of are chiefly of Israel, who must of necessity forfeit their ancient privileges, and pay a heavier penalty than any other nation, because they were so unwilling to receive Him Who had long been prophesied among them, had been worshipped, and had come forth from them. In a most especial manner then he threatens them with not only a fall from spiritual freedom, but also the destruction of their city, and of those who dwelt among them. But a resurrection is promised to believers, partly indeed as subject to the law, and about to be delivered from its bondage, but partly as buried together with Christ, and rising with Him.

Gregory of Nyssa. (hom. de occ. Dom.) Now from these words, you may perceive through the agreement of men's minds on the word of prophecy, that one and the same God and lawgiver hath spoken both in the Prophets and the New Testament. For the language of prophecy declared that there shall be *a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, that they who believe on Him should not be confounded.* (Is. 8:14, Rom. 9:33.) The fall therefore is to them who are offended with the meanness of His coming in the flesh; the rising again to those who acknowledge the stedfastness of the Divine purpose.

Origen. There is also a deeper meaning aimed against those who raise their voices against their Creator, saying, Behold the God of the Law and the Prophets of what sort He is! He says, *I kill, and I make alive.* (Deut. 32:39.) If God then is a bloody judge and a cruel master, it is most plain that Jesus is His Son, since the same things here are written of Him, namely, that he comes for the fall and rising again of many.

Ambrose. That is, to distinguish the merits of the just and the unjust, and according to the quality of our deeds, as a true and just Judge, to decree punishment or rewards.

Origen. But we must take care lest by chance the Saviour should not come to some equally for the fall and rising again; for when I stood in sin, it was first good for me to fall, and die to sin. Lastly, Prophets and Saints when they were designing some great thing, used to fall on their faces, that by their fall their sins should be the more fully blotted out. This it is that the Saviour first grants to thee. Thou wert a sinner, let that which is sin fall in thee, that thou mayest thence rise again, and say, *If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.* (2 Tim. 2:11.)

Chrysostom. The resurrection is a new life and conversation. For when the sensual man becomes chaste, the covetous merciful, the cruel man gentle, a resurrection takes place. Sin being dead, righteousness rises again. It follows, *And for a sign which shall be spoken against.*

Basil. (ep. 260. ad Opt.) The sign which is spoken against is called in Scripture, the cross. For Moses, it says, *made a brazen serpent, and placed it for a sign.* (Numb. 21:8.)

Gregory of Nyssa. (non occ.) He has joined together honour and dishonour. For to us Christians this sign is a token of honour, but it is a sign of contradiction, inasmuch by some indeed it is received as absurd and monstrous, by others with the greatest veneration. Or perhaps Christ Himself is termed a sign, as having a supernatural existence, and as the author of signs.

Basil. (ubi sup.) For a sign betokens something marvellous and mysterious, which is seen indeed by the simple minded.

Origen. But all the things which history relates of Christ are spoken against, not that those who believe on Him speak against Him, (for we know that all the things which are written of Him are true,) but that every thing which has been written of Him is with the unbelievers a sign which is spoken against.

Gregory of Nyssa. (non occ.) Though these things are said of the Son, yet they have reference also to His mother, who takes each thing to herself, whether it be of danger or glory. He announces to her not only her prosperity, but her sorrows; for it follows. *And a sword shall pierce through thy own heart.*

Bede. No history tells us that Mary departed this life by being slain with the sword, therefore since not the soul but the body is killed with iron, we are left to understand that sword which is mentioned, *And a sword in their lips*, (Ps. 59:7.) that is, grief because of our Lord's passion passed through her soul, who although she saw Christ the very Son of God die a voluntary death, and doubted not that He who was begotten of her flesh would overcome death, could not without grief see Him crucified.

Ambrose. Or it shews the wisdom of Mary, that she was not ignorant of the heavenly Majesty. For the word of God is living and strong, and sharper than the sharpest sword. (Heb. 4:12.)

Augustine. (de Nov. ac vet, Test. c. 73.) Or by this is signified that Mary also, through whom was performed the mystery of the incarnation, looked with doubt and astonishment at the death of her Lord, seeing the Son of God so humbled as to come down even to death. And as a sword passing close by a man causes fear, though it does not strike him; so doubt also causes sorrow, yet does not kill; for it is not fastened to the mind, but passes through it as through a shadow.

Gregory of Nyssa. (de occ. Dom. non occ.) But it is not meant that she alone was concerned in that passion, for it is added, *that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.* The word *that* marks the event; it is not used causatively; for when all these events took place, there followed the discovery of many men's intentions. For some confessed God on the cross, others even then ceased not from their blasphemies and revilings. Or this was said, meaning that at the time of the passion the thoughts of men's hearts should be laid open, and be corrected by the resurrection. For doubts are quickly superseded by certainty. Or perhaps by revealing may be meant, the enlightening of the thoughts, as it is often used in Scripture.

Bede. But now even down to the close of the present time, the sword of the severest tribulation ceases not to go through the soul of the Church, when with bitter sorrow she experiences the evil speaking against the sign of faith, when hearing the word of God that many are raised with Christ, she finds still more falling from the faith, when at the revealing of the thoughts of many hearts, in which the good seed of the Gospel has been sown, she beholds the tares of vice overshooting it, spreading beyond it, or growing alone.

Origen. But the evil thoughts of men were revealed, that He Who died for us might slay them; for while they were hidden, it was impossible to utterly destroy them. Hence also when we have sinned we ought to say, *Mine iniquity have I not hid.* (Ps. 32:5.) For if we make known our sins not only to God, but to whoever can heal our wounds, our sins will be blotted out.

2:36–38

36. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37. And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

38. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Ambrose. Simeon had prophesied, a woman united in marriage had prophesied, a virgin had prophesied, it was meet also that a widow should prophesy, that there might lack no sex or condition of life, and therefore it is said, *And there was one Anna a prophetess.*

Theophylact. The Evangelist dwells some time on the account of Anna, mentioning both her father's tribe, and adding, as it were, many witnesses who knew her father and her tribe.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) Or because at that time there were several others who were called by the same name, that there might be a plain way of distinguishing her, he mentions her father, and describes the quality of her parents.

Ambrose. Now Anna, both from the duties of her widowhood and her manner of life, is found to be such that she is thought worthy to announce the Redeemer of the world. As it follows, *She was of a great age, and had lived with her husband, &c.*

Origen. For the Holy Spirit dwelt not by chance in her. For the highest blessing, if any can possess it, is the grace of virginity, but if this cannot be, and it chance to a woman to lose her husband, let her remain a widow, which indeed not only after the death of her husband, but even while he is living, she ought to have in her mind, that supposing it should not happen, her will and determination might be crowned by the Lord, and her words should be, "This I vow, and promise, that if a certain condition of this life be mine, (which yet I wish not,) I will do nothing else but remain inviolate and a widow." Most justly then was this holy woman thought worthy to receive the gift of prophecy, because by long chastity and long fastings she had ascended to this height of virtue, as it follows, *Who departed not from the temple with fastings and prayers, &c.*

Origen. From which it is plain that she possessed a multitude of other virtues; and mark how she resembles Simeon in his goodness, for they were both in the temple together, and both counted worthy of prophetic grace, as it follows, *And she coming in at this very instant, gave thanks to the Lord.*

Theophylact. That is, returned thanks for seeing in Israel the Saviour of the world, and she confessed of Jesus that He was the Redeemer and the Saviour. Hence it follows, *And she spoke of him to all, &c.*

Origen. But because Anna's words were nothing remarkable, and of no great note respecting Christ, the Gospel does not give the particulars of what she said, and perhaps for this reason one may suppose that Simeon anticipated her, since he indeed bore the character of the law, (for his name signifies obedience,) but she the character of grace, (which her name is by interpretation,) and Christ came between them. Therefore He let Simeon depart dying with the law, but Anna he sustains living beyond through grace.

Bede. According to the mystical meaning, Anna signifies the Church, who at present is indeed a widow by the death of her Husband; the number also

of the years of her widowhood marks the time of the Church, at which established in the body, she is separated from the Lord. For seven times twelve make eighty-four, seven indeed referring to the course of this world, which revolves in seven days; but twelve had reference to the perfection of Apostolic teaching, and therefore the Universal Church, or any faithful soul which strives to devote the whole period of its life to the following of Apostolic practice, is said to serve the Lord for eighty-four years. The term also of seven years, during which she lived with her husband, coincides. For through the prerogative of our Lord's greatness, whereby abiding in the flesh, He taught, the simple number of seven years was taken to express the sign of perfection. Anna also favours the mysteries of the Church, being by interpretation its "grace," and being both the daughter of Phanuel, who is called "the face of God," and descended from the tribe of Aser, i. e. the blessed.

2:39–41

39. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

41. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover.

Bede. Luke has omitted in this place what he knew to have been sufficiently set forth by Matthew, that the Lord after this, for fear that He should be discovered and put to death by Herod, was carried by His parents into Egypt, and at Herod's death, having at length returned to Galilee, came to dwell in His own city Nazareth. For the Evangelists individually are wont to omit certain things which they either know to have been, or in the Spirit foresee will be, related by others, so that in the connected chain of their narrative, they seem as it were to have omitted nothing, whereas by examining the writings of another Evangelist, the careful reader may discover the places where the omissions have been. Thus after omitting many things, Luke says, *And when they had accomplished all things, &c.*

Theophylact. Bethlehem was indeed their city, their paternal city, Nazareth the place of their abode.

Augustine. (de Con. Evan. ii. 9.) Perhaps it may strike you as strange that Matthew should say that His parents went with the young Child into Galilee because they were unwilling to go to Judæa for fear of Archelaus, when they seem to have gone into Galilee rather because their city was Nazareth in Galilee, as Luke in this place explains it. But we must consider, that when the Angel, said in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, *Rise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel*, (Matt. 2:20.) it was at first understood by Joseph as a command to go into Judæa, for so at first sight the land of Israel might have been taken to mean. But when afterwards he finds that Herod's son Archelaus was king, he was unwilling to be exposed to that danger, seeing the land of Israel might also be understood to include Galilee also as a part of it, for there also the people of Israel dwelt.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes.) Or again, Luke is here describing the time before the descent to Egypt, for before her purification Joseph had not taken Mary there. But before they went down into Egypt, they were not told by God to go to Nazareth, but as living more freely in their own country, thither of their own accord they went; for since the going up to Bethlehem was for no other reason but the taxing, when that was accomplished they go down to Nazareth.

Theophylact. Now our Lord might have come forth from the womb in the stature of mature age, but this would seem like something imaginary; therefore His growth is gradual, as it follows, *And the child grew, and waxed strong.*

Bede. We must observe the distinction of words, that the Lord Jesus Christ in that He was a child, that is, had put on the condition of human weakness, was daily growing and being strengthened.

Athanasius. (lib. de Incarn. Christi cont. Apollin.) But if as some say the flesh was changed into a Divine nature, how did it derive growth? for to attribute growth to an uncreated substance is impious.

Cyril of Alexandria. Rightly with the growth in age, St. Luke has united increase in wisdom, as he says, *And he was strengthened*, (i. e. in spirit.) For in proportion to the measure of bodily growth, the Divine nature developed its own wisdom.

Theophylact. For if while yet a little child, He had displayed His wisdom, He would have seemed a miracle, but together with the advance of age He gradually shewed Himself, so as to fill the whole world. For not as receiving wisdom is He said to be strengthened in spirit. For that which is most perfect in the beginning, how can that become any more perfect. Hence it follows, *Filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was in him.*

Bede. Wisdom truly, for *in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, (Col. 2:19.) but grace, because it was in great grace given to the man Christ Jesus, that from the time He began to be man He should be perfect man and perfect God. But much rather because He was the word of God, and God needed not to be strengthened, nor was in a state of growth. But while He was yet a little child He had the grace of God, that as in Him all things were wonderful, His childhood also might be wonderful, so as to be filled with the wisdom of God. It follows, *And his parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the feast of the Passover.*

Chrysostom. (Orat. cont. Judæos.) At the feast of the Hebrews the law commanded men not only to observe the time, but the place, and so the Lord's parents wished to celebrate the feast of the Passover only at Jerusalem.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. ii. 10.) But it may be asked, how did His parents go up all the years of Christ's childhood to Jerusalem, if they were prevented from going there by fear of Archelaus? This question might be easily answered, even had some one of the Evangelists mentioned how long Archelaus reigned. For it were possible that on the feast day amid so great a crowd they might secretly come, and soon return again, at the same time that they feared to remain there on other days, so as neither to be wanting in religious duties by neglecting the feast, nor leave themselves open to detection by a constant abode there. But now since all have been silent as to the length of Archelaus' reign, it is plain that when Luke says, *They were accustomed to go up every year to Jerusalem*, we are to understand that to have been when Archelaus was no longer feared.

2:42–50

42. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.

43. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.

44. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.

45. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.

46. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

47. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.

48. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50. And they understood. not the saying which he spake unto them.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Evangelist having said before that the Child grew and waxed strong, verifies his own words when he relates, that Jesus with the holy Virgin went up to Jerusalem; as it is said, *And when he was twelve years old, &c.*

Greek Expositor. (Geometer) His indication of wisdom did not exceed the measure of His age, but at the time that with us the powers of discernment are generally perfected, the wisdom of Christ shews itself.

Ambrose. Or the twelfth year was the commencement of our Lord's disputation with the doctors, for this was the number of the Evangelists necessary to preach the faith.

Bede. We may also say, that as by the seventh number, so also by the twelfth, (which consists of the parts of seven multiplied alternately by one another,) the universality and perfection of either things or times is signified, and therefore rightly from the number twelve, the glory of Christ takes its beginning, being that by which all places and times are to be filled.

Bede. (in Hom. post Epiph.) Now that the Lord came up every year to Jerusalem at the Passover, betokens His humility as a man, for it is man's duty to meet together to offer sacrifices to God, and conciliate Him with prayers. Accordingly the Lord as man, did among men what God by angels commanded men to do. Hence it is said, *According to the custom of the feast day.* (Gal. 3:14, Judges 6:20; 13:16.) Let us follow then the journey of His mortal life, if we delight to behold the glory of His divine nature.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes vel Geometer.) The feast having been celebrated, while the rest returned, Jesus secretly tarried behind. As it follows, *And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew not of it.* It is said, *When the days were accomplished*, because the feast lasted seven days. But the reason of His tarrying behind in secret was, that His parents might not be a hindrance to His carrying on the discussion with the lawyers; or perhaps to avoid appearing to despise his parents by not obeying their commands. He remains therefore secretly, that he might neither be kept away nor be disobedient.

Origen. But we must not wonder that they are called His parents, seeing the one from her childbirth, the other from his knowledge of it, deserved the names of father and mother.

Bede. But some one will ask, how was it that the Son of God, brought up by His parents with such care, could be left behind from forgetfulness? To which it is answered, that the custom of the children of Israel while assembling at Jerusalem on the feast days, or returning to their homes, was for the women and men to go separately, and the infants or children to go with either parent indiscriminately. And so both Mary and Joseph each thought in turn that the Child Jesus, whom they saw not with them, was returning with the other parent. Hence it follows, *But they, supposing him to have been in the company, &c.*

Origen. But as when the Jews plotted against Him He escaped from the midst of them, and was not seen; so now it seems that the Child Jesus remained, and His parents knew not where He was. As it follows, *And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.* (John 10:29.)

Gloss. (ordin.) They were on their way home, one day's journey from Jerusalem; on the second day they seek for Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, and when they found Him not, they returned on the third day to Jerusalem, and there they found Him. As it follows, *And it came to pass, after three days they found him.*

Origen. He is not found as soon as sought for, for Jesus was not among His kinsfolk and relations, among those who are joined to Him in the flesh, nor in the company of the multitude can He be found. Learn where those who seek Him find Him, not every where, but in the temple. And do thou then seek Jesus in the temple of God. Seek Him in the Church, and seek Him among the masters who are in the temple. For if thou wilt so seek Him, thou shalt find Him. They found Him not among His kinsfolk, for human relations could not comprehend the Son of God; not among His acquaintance, for He passes far beyond all human knowledge and understanding. Where then do they find Him? In the temple! If at any time thou seek the Son of God, seek Him first in the temple, thither go up, and verily shalt thou find Christ, the Word, and the Wisdom, (i. e. the Son of God.)

Ambrose. After three days He is found in the temple, that it might be for a sign, that after three days of victorious suffering, He who was believed to be dead should rise again, and manifest Himself to our faith, seated in heaven with divine glory.

Gloss. (ubi sup.) Or because the advent of Christ, which was looked for by the Patriarchs before the Law, was not found, nor again, that which was sought for by prophets and just men under the Law, but that alone is found which is sought for by Gentiles under grace.

Origen. Because moreover He was the Son of God, He is found in the midst of the doctors, enlightening and instructing them. But because He was a little child, He is found among them not teaching but asking questions, as it is said, *Sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions.* And this He did as a duty of reverence, that He might set us an example of the proper behaviour of children, though they be wise and learned, rather to hear their masters than teach them, and not to vaunt themselves with empty boasting. But He asked not that He might learn, but that asking He

might instruct. For from the same source of learning is derived both the power of asking and answering wisely, as it follows, *All who heard him were astonished at his wisdom.*

Bede. To shew that He was a man, He humbly listened to the masters; but to prove that He was God, He divinely answered those who spake.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes vel Geometer.) He asks questions with reason, He listens with wisdom, and answers with more wisdom, so as to cause astonishment. As it follows, *And they who saw it were astonished.*

Chrysostom. (sup. Joh. Hom. 20.) The Lord truly did no miracle in His childhood, yet this one fact St. Luke mentions, which made men look with wonder upon Him.

Bede. For from His tongue there went forth divine wisdom, while His age exhibited man's helplessness, and hence the Jews, amid the high things they hear and the lowly things they see, are perplexed with doubts and astonishment. But we can in no wise wonder, knowing the words of the Prophet, that thus unto us a Child is born, that He abideth the mighty God. (Is. 9:6.)

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) But the ever-wonderful mother of God, moved by a mother's feelings, as it were with weeping makes her mournful enquiry, in every thing like a mother, with confidence, humility, and affection. As it follows, *And his mother said unto him, Son, what hast thou done?*

Origen. The holy Virgin knew that He was not the Son of Joseph, and yet calls her husband His father according to the belief of the Jews, who thought that He was conceived in the common way. Now to speak generally we may say, that the Holy Spirit honoured Joseph by the name of father, because he brought up the Child Jesus; but more technically, that it might not seem superfluous in St. Luke, bringing down the genealogy from David to Joseph. But why sought they Him sorrowing? Was it that he might have perished or been lost? It could not be. For what should cause them to dread the loss of Him whom they knew to be the Lord? But as whenever you read the Scriptures you search out their meaning with pains, not that you suppose them to have erred or to contain anything incorrect, but that the truth which they have inherent in them you are anxious to find out; so they sought Jesus, lest perchance leaving them he should have returned to heaven, thither to descend when He would. He then who seeks Jesus must go about it not carelessly and idly, as many seek Him who never find Him, but with labour and sorrow.

Gloss. (ordin.) Or they feared lest Herod who sought Him in His infancy, now that He was advanced to boyhood might find an opportunity of putting Him to death.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes et Geometer.) But the Lord Himself sets every thing at rest, and correcting as it were her saying concerning him who was His reputed father, manifests His true Father, teaching us not to walk on the ground, but to raise ourselves on high, as it follows, *And he says unto them, What is it that you ask of me?*

Bede. He blames them not that they seek Him as their son, but compels them to raise the eyes of their mind to what was rather due to Him whose eternal Son He was. Hence it follows, *Knew ye not? &c.*

Ambrose. There are two generations in Christ, one from His Father, the other from His mother; the Father's more divine, the mother's that which has come down for our use and advantage.

Cyril of Alexandria. He says this then by way of shewing that He surpasses all human standards, and hinting that the Holy Virgin was made the handmaid of the work in bringing His flesh unto the world, but that He Himself was by nature and in truth God, and the Son of the Father most high. Now from this let the followers of Valentinus, hearing that the temple was of God, be ashamed to say that the Creator, and the God of the law and of the temple, is not also the Father of Christ.

Epiphanius. (cont. Hær. l. ii. hær. 31.) Let Ebion know that at twelve years old, not thirty, Christ is found the astonishment of all men, wonderful and mighty in the words of grace. We can not therefore say, that after that the Spirit came to Him in Baptism He was made the *Christ*, that is, *anointed with divinity*, but from His very childhood He acknowledged both the temple and His Father.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) This is the first demonstration of the wisdom and power of the Child Jesus. For as to what are called the [a] acts of His childhood, we can not but suppose them to be the work not only of a childish but even of a devilish mind and perverse will, attempting to revile those things which are contained in the Gospel and the sacred prophecies. But should one desire to receive only such things as are generally believed, and are not contrary to our other declarations, but accord also with the words of prophecy, let it suffice that Jesus was distinguished in form above the sons of men; obedient to His mother, gentle in disposition; in appearance full of grace and dignity; eloquent in words, kind and thoughtful of the wants of others, known among all for a power and energy, as of one who was filled with all wisdom; and as in other things, so also in all human conversation, though above man, Himself the rule and measure. But that which most distinguished Him was His meekness, and that a razor had never come upon His head, nor any human hand except His mother's. But from these words we may derive a lesson; for when the Lord reproves Mary seeking Him among His relations, He most aptly points to the giving up of all fleshly ties, shewing that it is not for him to attain the goal of perfection who is still encompassed by and walks among the things of the body, and that men fall from perfection through love of their relations.

Bede. It follows, *And they understood him not*, that is, the word which He spoke to them of His divinity.

Origen. Or they knew not whether when He said *about my Father's business*, He referred to the temple, or something higher and more edifying; for every one of us who doeth good, is the seat of God the Father; but whoso is the seat of God the Father, has Christ in the midst of him.

2:51–52

51. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) All that time of the life of Christ which He passed between His manifestation in the temple and His baptism, being devoid of any great public miracles or teaching, the Evangelist sums up in one word, saying, *And he went down with them.*

Origen. Jesus frequently went down with His disciples, for He is not always dwelling on the mount, for they who were troubled with various diseases

were not able to ascend the mount. For this reason now also He went down to them who were below. It follows: *And he was subject to them, &c.*

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) Sometimes by His word He first institutes laws, and He afterwards confirms them by His work, as when He says, *The good shepherd layeth down his life for his sheep.* (John 10:11) For shortly after seeking our salvation He poured out His own life. But sometimes He first sets forth in Himself an example, and afterwards, as far as words can go, draws therefrom rules of life, as He does here, shewing forth by His work these three things above the rest, the love of God, honour to parents, but the preferring God also to our parents. For when He was blamed by His parents, He counts all other things of less moment than those which belong to God; again, He gives His obedience also to His parents.

Bede. For what is the teacher of virtue, unless he fulfil his duty to his parents? What else did He do among us, than what He wished should be done by us?

Origen. Let us then also ourselves be subject to our parents. But if our fathers are not, let us be subject to those who are our fathers. Jesus the Son of God is subject to Joseph and Mary. But I must be subject to the Bishop who has been constituted my father. It seems that Joseph knew that Jesus was greater than he, and therefore in awe moderated his authority. But let every one see, that oftentimes he who is subject is the greater. Which if they who are higher in dignity understand, they will not be clated with pride, knowing that their superior is subject to them.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. in 1 Cor. 15:28.) Further, since the young have not yet perfect understanding, and have need to be led forward by those who have advanced to a more perfect state; therefore when He arrived at twelve years, He is obedient to His parents, to shew that whatever is made perfect by moving forward, before that it arrives at the end profitably embraces obedience, (as leading to good.)

Basil. (in Const. Mon. 4.) But from His very first years being obedient to His parents, He endured all bodily labours, humbly and reverently. For since His parents were honest and just, yet at the same time poor, and ill supplied with the necessaries of life, (as the stable which administered to the holy birth bears witness,) it is plain that they continually underwent bodily fatigue in providing for their daily wants. But Jesus being obedient to them, as the Scriptures testify, even in sustaining labours, submitted Himself to a complete subjection.

Ambrose. And can you wonder if He who is subject to His mother, also submits to His Father? Surely that subjection is a mark not of weakness but of filial duty. Let then the heretic so raise his head as to assert that He who is sent has need of other help; yet why should He need human help, in obeying His mother's authority? He was obedient to a handmaid, He was obedient to His pretended father, and do you wonder whether He obeyed God? Or is it a mark of duty to obey man, of weakness to obey God?

Bede. The Virgin, whether she understood or whether she could not yet understand, equally laid up all things in her heart for reflection and diligent examination. Hence it follows, *And his mother laid up all these things, &c.* Mark the wisest of mothers, Mary the mother of true wisdom, becomes the scholar or disciple of the Child. For she yielded to Him not as to a boy, nor as to a man, but as unto God. Further, she pondered upon both His divine words and works, so that nothing that was said or done by Him was lost upon her, but as the Word itself was before in her womb, so now she conceived the ways and words of the same, and in a manner nursed them in her heart. And while indeed she thought upon one thing at the time, another she wanted to be more clearly revealed to her; and this was her constant rule and law through her whole life. It follows, *And Jesus increased in wisdom.*

Theophylact. Not that He became wise by making progress, but that by degrees He revealed His wisdom. As it was when He disputed with the Scribes, asking them questions of their law to the astonishment of all who heard Him. You see then how He increased in wisdom, in that He became known to many, and caused them to wonder, for the shewing forth of His wisdom is His increase. But mark how the Evangelist, having interpreted what it is to increase in wisdom, adds, *and in stature*, declaring thereby that an increase or growth in age is an increase in wisdom.

Cyril of Alexandria. (Thes. l. x. c. 7.) But the Eunomian Heretics [b] say, "How can He be equal to the Father in substance, who is said to increase, as if before imperfect." But not because He is the Word, but because He is made man, He is said to receive increase. For if He really increased after that He was made flesh, as having before existed imperfect, why then do we give Him thanks as having thence become incarnate for us? But how if He is the true wisdom can He be increased, or how can He who gives grace to others be Himself advanced in grace. Again, if hearing that the Word humbled Himself, no one is offended (thinking slightingly of the true God,) but rather marvels at His compassion, how is it not absurd to be offended at hearing that He increases? For as He was humbled for us, so for us He increased, that we who have fallen through sin might increase in Him. For whatever concerns us, Christ Himself has truly undertaken for us, that He might restore us to a better state. And mark what He says, not that the Word, but Jesus, increases, that you should not suppose that the pure Word increases, but the Word made flesh; and as we confess that the Word suffered in the flesh, although the flesh only suffered, because of the Word the flesh was which suffered, so He is said to increase, because the human nature of the Word increased in Him. But He is said to increase in His human nature, not as if that nature which was perfect from the beginning received increase, but that by degrees it was manifested. For the law of nature brooks not that man should have higher faculties than the age of his body permits. The Word then (made man) was perfect, as being the power and wisdom of the Father, but because something was to be yielded to the habits of our nature, lest He should be counted strange by those who saw Him, He manifested Himself as man with a body, gradually advancing in growth, and was daily thought wiser by those who saw and heard Him.

Greek Expositor. (Amphilochius.) He increased then *in age*, His body growing to the stature of man; but in *wisdom* through those who were taught divine truths by Him; *in grace*, that is, whereby we are advanced with joy, trusting at last to obtain the promises; and this indeed *before God*, because having put on the flesh, He performed His Father's work, but *before men* by their conversion from the worship of idols to the knowledge of the Most High Trinity.

Theophylact. He says *before God and men*, because we must first please God, then man.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Hom. 3. in Cant.) The word also increases in different degrees in those who receive it; and according to the measure of its increase a man appears either an infant, grown up, or a perfect man.

CHAP. 3

3:1–2

1. Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

2. Annas and Caiaphas being the High Priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness.

Gregory. (Hom. 20. in Ev.) The time at which the forerunner of the Saviour received the word of preaching, is marked by the names of the Roman sovereign and of the princes of Judæa, as it follows: *Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, &c.* For because John came to preach Him who was to redeem some from among the Jews, and many among the Gentiles, therefore the time of his preaching is marked out by making mention of the king of the Gentiles and the rulers of the Jews. But because all nations were to be gathered together in one, one man is described as ruling over the Roman state, as it is said, *The reign of Tiberius Cæsar.*

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes) For the emperor Augustus being dead, from whom the Roman sovereigns obtained the name of "Augustus," Tiberius being his successor in the monarchy, was now in the 15th year of his receiving the reins of government.

Origen. In the word of prophecy, spoken to the Jews alone, the Jewish kingdom only is mentioned, as, *The vision of Esaias, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.* (Is. 1:1.) But in the Gospel which was to be proclaimed to the whole world, the empire of Tiberius Cæsar is mentioned, who seemed the lord of the whole world. But if the Gentiles only were to be saved, it were sufficient to make mention only of Tiberius, but because the Jews also must believe, the Jewish kingdom therefore, or Tetrarchies, are also introduced, as it follows, *Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod tetrarch, &c.*

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Because the Jews were to be scattered for their crime of treachery, the Jewish kingdom was shut up into parts under several governors. According to that saying, *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation.* (Luke 11:17.)

Bede. Pilate was sent in the twelfth year of Tiberius to take the government of the Jewish nation, and remained there for ten successive years, almost until the death of Tiberius. But Herod, and Philip, and Lysanias, were the sons of that Herod in whose reign our Lord was born. Between these and Herod himself Archelaus their brother reigned ten years. He was accused by the Jews before Augustus, and perished in exile at Vienne. But in order to reduce the Jewish kingdom to greater weakness, August us divided it into Tetrarchies.

Gregory. Because John preached Him who was to be at the same time both King and Priest, Luke the Evangelist has marked the time of that preaching by the mention not only of Kings, but also of Priests. As it follows, *Under the High Priests Annas and Caiaphas.*

Bede. Both Annas and Caiaphas, when John began his preaching, were the High Priests, but Annas held the office that year, Caiaphas the same year in which our Lord suffered on the cross. Three others had held the office in the intervening time, but these two, as having particular reference to our Lord's Passion, are mentioned by the Evangelist. For at that time of violence and intrigue, the commands of the Law being no longer in force, the honour of the High Priest's office was never given to merit or high birth, but the whole affairs of the Priesthood were managed by the Roman power. For Josephus relates, that Valerius Gratus, when Annas was thrust out of the Priesthood, appointed Ismael High Priest, the son of Baphas; but not long after casting him off, he put in his place Eleazar the son of the High Priest Ananias. After the space of one year, he expelled him also from the office, and delivered the government of the High Priesthood to a certain Simon, son of Caiaphas, who holding it not longer than a year, had Joseph, whose name also was Caiaphas, for his successor; so that the whole time during which our Lord is related to have taught is included in the space of four years.

Ambrose. The Son of God being about to gather together the Church, commences His work in His servant. And so it is well said, *The word of the Lord came to John*, that the Church should begin not from man, but from the Word. But Luke, in order to declare that John was a prophet, rightly used these few words, *The word of the Lord came to him.* He adds nothing else, for they need not their own judgment who are filled with the Word of God. By saying this one thing, he has therefore declared all. But Matthew and Mark desired to shew him to be a prophet, by his raiment, his girdle, and his food.

Chrysostom. (in Matt. Hom. 10.) The word of God here mentioned was a commandment, for the son of Zacharias came not of himself, but God moved him.

Theophylact. Through the whole of the time until his shewing himself he was hid in the wilderness, that no suspicion might arise in men's minds, that from his relation to Christ, and from his intercourse with Him from a child, he would testify such things of Him; and hence he said, *I knew him not.* (John 1:33.)

Gregory of Nyssa. (de Virg. c. 6.) Who also entered this life at once in the spirit and power of Elias, removed from the society of men, in uninterrupted contemplation of invisible things, that he might not, by becoming accustomed to the false notions forced upon us by our senses, fall into mistakes and errors in the discernment of good men. And to such a height of divine grace was he raised, that more favour was bestowed upon him than the Prophets, for from the beginning even to the end, he ever presented his heart before God pure and free from every natural passion.

Ambrose. Again, the wilderness is the Church itself, for the barren has more children than she who has an husband. The word of the Lord came, that the earth which was before barren might bring forth fruit unto us.

3:3–6

3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4. As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

6. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Ambrose. The Word came, and the voice followed. For the Word first works inward, then follows the office of the voice, as it is said, *And he went into all the country about Jordan.*

Origen. Jordan is the same as *descending*, for there descends from God a river of healing water. But what parts would John be traversing but the country lying about Jordan, that the penitent sinner might soon arrive at the flowing stream, humbling himself to receive the baptism of repentance. For it is added, *preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.*

Gregory. (ubi sup.) It is plain to every reader that John not only preached the baptism of repentance, but to some also he gave it, yet his own baptism he could not give for the remission of sins.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) For as the sacrifice had not yet been offered up, nor had the holy Spirit descended, how could remission of sins be given? What is it then that St. Luke means by the words, *for the remission of sins?* Seeing the Jews were ignorant, and knew not the weight of their sins, and because this was the cause of their evils, in order that they might be convinced of their sins and seek a Redeemer, John came exhorting them to repentance, that being thereby made better and sorrowful for their sins, they might be ready to receive pardon. Rightly then after saying, that *he came preaching the baptism of repentance*, he adds, *for the remission of sins.* As if he should say, The reason by which he persuaded them to repent was, that thereby they would the more easily obtain subsequent pardon, believing on Christ. For if they were not led by repentance, in vain could they ask for grace, other than as a preparation for faith in Christ.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Or John is said to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, because the baptism which was to take away sin, as he could not give, he preached; just as the Incarnate Word of the Father preceded the word of preaching, so the baptism of repentance, which was able to take away sin, was preceded by John's baptism, which could not take away sin.

Ambrose. And therefore many say that St. John is a type of the Law, because the Law could denounce sin, but could not pardon it.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 39.) To speak now of the difference of baptisms. Moses indeed baptized, but in the water, the cloud, and the sea, but this was done figuratively. John also baptized, not indeed according to the Jewish rite, (for he baptized not only with water,) but also for the remission of sins, yet not altogether spiritually, (for he adds not, *in the Spirit.*) Jesus baptizes but with the Spirit, and this is perfect baptism. There is also a fourth baptism, namely by martyrdom and blood, by which also Christ Himself was baptized, and which is so far more glorious than the others, as it is not sullied by repeated acts of defilement. There is also a fifth, the most weary, according to which David every night washed his bed and his couch with tears. It follows, *As it is written in the book of Esaias the Prophet, The voice of one crying in the wilderness.* (Is. 40:3.)

Ambrose. John the forerunner of the Word is rightly called the voice, because the voice being inferior precedes, the Word, which is more excellent, follows.

Gregory. (7, 20. in Ev.) John cries in the desert because he brings the glad tidings of redemption to deserted and forsaken Judæa, but what he cries is explained in the words, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord.* For they who preach true faith and good works, what else do they than prepare the way for the Lord's coming into the hearts of the hearers, that they might make the paths of God straight, forming pure thoughts in the mind by the word of good preaching.

Origen. Or, a way must be prepared in our heart for the Lord, for the heart of man is large and spacious if it has become clean. For imagine not that in the size of the body, but in the virtue of the understanding, consists that greatness which must receive the knowledge of the truth. Prepare then in thy heart by good conversation a way for the Lord, and by perfect works pursue the path of life, that so the word of God may have free course in thee.

Basil. (non occ.) And because a path is a way trodden down by those that have gone before, and which former men have worn away, the word bids those who depart from the zeal of their predecessors repeatedly pursue it.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But to cry, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord*, was not the office of the king, but of the forerunner. And so they called John the voice, because he was the forerunner of the Word.

Cyril of Alexandria. (in Esai. 40. lib. 3.) But suppose some one should answer, saying, How shall we prepare the way of the Lord, or how shall we make His paths straight? since so many are the hindrances to those who wish to lead an honest life. To this the word of prophecy replies, There are some ways and paths by no means easy to travel, being in some places hilly and rugged, in others steep and precipitous; to remove which it says, *Every valley shall be filled, every mountain and hill shall he brought low.* Some roads are most unequally constructed, and while in one part rising, in another sloping downwards, are very difficult to pass. And here he adds, *And the crooked ways shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth.* But this was in a spiritual manner brought to pass by the power of our Saviour. For formerly to pursue an Evangelical course of life was a difficult task, for men's minds were so immersed in worldly pleasures. But now that God being made Man, has condemned sin in the flesh, all things are made plain, and the way of going has become easy, and neither hill nor valley is an obstacle to those who wish to advance.

Origen. For when Jesus had come and sent His Spirit, every valley was filled with good works, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which if thou hast, thou wilt not only cease to become a valley, but will begin also to be a mountain of God.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) Or by the valleys he means a quiet habitual practice of virtue, as in the Psalms, *The valleys shall be filled with corn.* (Ps. 65:13.)

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) He denounces the haughty and arrogant by the name of mountains, whom Christ has brought low. But by the hills He implies the wreckless, not only because of the pride of their hearts, but because of the barrenness of despair. For the hill produces no fruit.

Origen. Or you may understand the mountains and hills to be the hostile powers, which have been overthrown by the coming of Christ.

Basil. (non occ.) But as the hills differ from mountains in respect of height, in other things are the same, so also the adverse powers agree indeed in purpose, but are distinguished from one another in the enormity of their offences.

Gregory. (20. in Ev.) Or, the valley when filled increases, but the mountains and hills when brought low decrease, because the Gentiles by faith in Christ receive fulness of grace, but the Jews by their sin of treachery have lost that wherein they boasted. For the humble receive a gift because the hearts of the proud they keep afar off.

Chrysostom. (in Matt. Hom. 10.) Or by these words he declares the difficulties of the law to be turned into the easiness of faith; as if he said, No more toils and labours await us, but grace and remission of sins make an easy way to salvation.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) Or, He orders the valleys to be filled, the mountains and hills to be cast down, to shew that the rule of virtue neither fails from want of good, nor transgresses from excess.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But the crooked places are become straight, when the hearts of the wicked, perverted by a course of injustice, are directed to the rule of justice. But the rough ways are changed to smooth, when fierce and savage dispositions by the influence of Divine grace return to gentleness and meekness.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) He then adds the cause of these things, saying, *And all flesh shall see, &c.* shewing that the virtue and knowledge of the Gospel shall be extended even to the end of the world, turning mankind from savage manners and perverse wills to meekness and gentleness. Not only Jewish converts but all mankind shall see the salvation of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) That is, of the Father, who sent His Son as our Saviour. But the flesh is here taken for the whole man.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Or else, All flesh, i. e. Every man can not see the salvation of God in Christ in this life. The Prophet therefore stretches his eye beyond to the last day of judgment, when all men both the elect and the reprobate shall equally see Him.

3:7–9

7. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8. Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9. And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire,

Origen. No one that remains in his old state, and forsakes not his old habits and practices, can rightly come to be baptized; whoever then wishes to be baptized, let him *go forth*. Hence are those words significantly spoken, *And he said unto the multitude that went forth to be baptized of him.* To the multitudes then who are going forth to the laver of baptism, He speaks the following words, for if they had already gone forth, He would not have said, *O generation of vipers.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. in Matt. 10.) The dweller in the wilderness, when he saw all the people of Palestine standing round him and wondering, bent not beneath the weight of such respect, but rose up against them and reproved them. (Hom. in Gen. 12.) The holy Scripture often gives the names of wild beasts to men, according to the passions which excite them, calling them sometimes dogs because of their impudence, horses on account of their lust, asses for their folly, lions and panthers for their ravening and wantonness, asps for their guile, serpents and vipers for their poison and cunning; and so in this place John calls the Jews *a generation of vipers.*

Basil. (cont. Eunom. lib. 2.) Now it may be observed, that the following words *natus* and *filius* are spoken of animals, but *genimen* may be said of the fœtus before it is formed in the womb; the fruit of the palm trees is also called *genimina*, but that word is very seldom used with respect to animals, and when it is, always in a bad sense.

Chrysostom. (Hom. in Matt. 11.) Now they say that the female viper kills the male in copulation, and the fœtus as it increases in the womb kills the mother, and so comes forth into life, bursting open the womb in revenge as it were of its father's death; the viper progeny therefore are parricides. Such also were the Jews, who killed their spiritual fathers and teachers. But what if he found them not sinning, but beginning to be converted? He ought not surely to rebuke them, but to comfort them. We answer, that he gave not heed to those things which are outward, for he knew the secrets of their hearts, the Lord revealing them to him; for they vaunted themselves too much in their forefathers. Cutting therefore at this root, he calls them a *generation of vipers*, not indeed that he blamed the Patriarchs, or called them vipers.

Gregory. (in Hom. 20, in Ev.) Because the Jews hated good men, and persecuted them, following the steps of their carnal parents, they are by birth the poisonous sons, as it were, of poisonous or sorcerous parents. But because the preceding verse declares that at the last judgment Christ shall be seen by all flesh, it is rightly added, *Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?* The wrath to come being the awarding of final punishment.

Ambrose. We see these men through the compassion of God, inspired with prudence to seek repentance of their crimes, dreading with wise devotion the terror of the judgment to come. Or perhaps, according to the precept, *Be ye wise as serpents*, (Matt. 10:16.) they are shewn to have a natural prudence, who perceive what is coming, and earnestly desire help, though they still forsake not what is hurtful.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But because he cannot then flee from the wrath of God, who now has not recourse to the sorrows of repentance, it is added, *Bring forth therefore fruits.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) For it is not sufficient for the penitent to leave off his sins, he must also bring forth the fruits of repentance, as it is in the Psalms, *depart from evil and do good*, (Ps. 34:14.) just as in order to heal, it will not do to pluck out the arrow only, but we must also apply a salve to the wound. But he says not fruit, but *fruits*, signifying abundance.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) He warns them that they must bring forth not only the fruits of repentance, but fruits worthy of repentance. For he that has violated no law, to him it is permitted to use what is lawful, but if a man has fallen into sin, he ought so to cut himself off from what is lawful, as he remembers to have committed what is unlawful. For the fruit of good works ought not to be equal in the man who has sinned less, and the man who has sinned more, nor in him who has fallen into no crimes, and him who has fallen into some. In this way it is adapted to the conscience of each man, that they should seek for so much the greater blessing on good works through repentance, as they have by guilt brought on themselves the heavier penalties.

Maximus. (lib. Ascet.) The fruit of repentance is an equanimity of soul, which we do not fully obtain, as long as we are at times affected by our passions, for not as yet have we performed the fruits worthy of repentance. Let us then repent truly, that being delivered from our passions we may obtain the pardon of their sins.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But the Jews glorying in their noble birth were unwilling to acknowledge themselves sinners, because they were descended from the stock of Abraham. So then it is rightly said, *And begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham for our father.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Not meaning thereby that they had not descended in their natural course from Abraham, but that it avails them nothing to have Abraham for their father, unless they observed the relationship in respect of virtue. For Scripture is accustomed to entitle laws of relationship, such as do not exist by nature, but are derived from virtue or vice. To whichsoever of these two a man conforms himself, he is called its son or brother.

Cyril of Alexandria. For what profits the nobleness we inherit through the flesh, unless it be supported by kindred feelings in us? It is folly then to boast of our worthy ancestors, and fall away from their virtues.

Basil. (non occ.) For neither does the speed of its sire make the horse swift; but as the goodness of other animals is looked for in individuals, so also that is reckoned to be man's legitimate praise which is decided by the test of his present worth. For it is a disgraceful thing for a man to be adorned with the honours of another, when he has no virtue of his own to commend him.

Gregory of Nyssa. (non occ.) So then having foretold the casting away of the Jews, He goes on to allude to the calling of the Gentiles, whom He calls *stones*. Hence it follows, *For I say unto you, &c.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) As if He said, Think not that if you perish the Patriarch will be deprived of sons, for God even from stones can produce men unto him, and prolong the line of his descendants. For so has it been from the beginning, seeing that for men to be made from stones unto Abraham is but equivalent to the coming forth of a son from the dead womb of Sarah.

Ambrose. But although God can alter and change the most diverse natures, yet in my mind a mystery is of more avail than a miracle. For what else than stones were they who bowed down to stones, like indeed to them who made them. It is prophesied therefore that faith shall be poured into the stony hearts of the Gentiles, and through faith the oracles promise that Abraham shall have sons. But that you may know who are the men compared to stones, he has also compared men to trees, adding, *For now the axe is laid to the root of the tree.* This change of figure was made, that by means of comparison might be understood to have now commenced a more kindly growth of manhood.

Origen. If the completion of all things had been then already begun, and the end of time close at hand, I should have no question but that the prophecy was given, because at that time it was to be fulfilled. But now that many ages have elapsed since the Spirit spoke this, I think it was prophesied to the people of Israel, because their cutting off was approaching. For to those that went out to him that they should be baptized, he gave this warning among others.

Cyril of Alexandria. By the axe then he declares the deadly wrath of God, which fell upon the Jews on account of the impieties they practised against Christ; he does not pronounce the axe to be yet fixed to the root, (ad radicem) but that it was laid, i. e. near the root. For though the branches were cut down, the tree itself was not yet entirely destroyed. For a remnant of Israel shall be saved.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Or we may take it in this way; The tree represents the whole human race in this world, but the axe is our redeemer, who by the handle and iron, as it were, is held indeed in the hand of man, but strikes by the power of God. Which axe indeed is now laid at the root of the tree; for although it waits patiently, yet it is plain what it is about to do. And we must observe that the said axe is to be laid not at the branches, but at the root. For when the children of the wicked are taken away, what is this but the cutting off of the branches of an unfruitful tree. But when the whole family together with the parent is removed, the unfruitful tree is cut off from the very root. But every hardened sinner finds the fire of hell the quicker prepared for him, as he disdains to bring forth the fruits of good works. Hence it follows, *Every one then.*

Chrysostom. It is elegantly said, *that beareth not fruit*, and it is added, *good.* For God created man an animal fond of employment, and constant activity is natural to him, but idleness is unnatural. For idleness is hurtful to every member of the body, but much more to the soul. For the soul being by nature in constant motion does not admit of being slothful. But as idleness is an evil, so also is an unworthy activity. But having before spoken of repentance, he now declares that the axe lies near, not indeed actually cutting, but only striking terror.

Ambrose. Let him then that is able *bring forth fruit* unto grace, him who ought, unto repentance. The Lord is at hand seeking for His fruit, who shall cherish the fruitful, but rebuke the barren.

3:10–14

10. And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?

11. He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.

12. Then came also Publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?

13. And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you.

14. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) In the preceding words of John, it is plain that the hearts of his hearers were troubled, and sought for advice from him. As it is added, *And they asked him, saying, &c.*

Origen. Three classes of men are introduced as enquiring of John concerning their salvation, one which the Scripture calls *the multitude*, another to which it gives the name of *Publicans*, and a third which is noticed by the appellation of *soldiers*.

Theophylact. Now to the Publicans and soldiers he gives a commandment to abstain from evil, but the multitudes, as not living in an evil condition, he commands to perform some good work, as it follows, *He that hath two coats, let him give one.*

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Because a coat is more necessary for our use than a cloak, it belongs to the bringing forth of fruits worthy of repentance, that we should divide with our neighbours not only our superfluities but those which are absolutely necessary to us, as our coat, or the meat with which we support our bodies; and hence it follows, *And he who has meat, let him do likewise.*

Basil. But we are hereby taught, that every thing we have over and above what is necessary to our daily support, we are bound to give to him who hath nothing for God's sake, who hath given us liberally whatever we possess.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) For because it was written in the law, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, he is proved to love his neighbour less than himself, who does not share with him in his distress, those things which are even necessary to himself. Therefore that precept is given of dividing with one's neighbour the two coats, since if one is divided no one is clothed. But we must remark in this, of how much value are works of mercy, since of the works worthy of repentance these are enjoined before all others.

Ambrose. For other commands of duty have reference only to individuals, mercy has a common application. It is therefore a common commandment to all, *to contribute to him that has not*. Mercy is the fulness of virtues, yet in mercy itself a proportion is observed to meet the capacities of man's condition, in that each individual is not to deprive himself of all, but what he has to share it with the poor.

Origen. But this place admits of a deeper meaning, for as we ought not to serve two masters, so neither to have two coats, lest one should be the clothing of the old man, the other of the new, but we ought to cast off the old man, and give to him who is naked. For one man has one coat, another has none at all, the strength therefore of the two is exactly contrary, and as it has been written that we should cast all our crimes to the bottom of the sea, so ought we to throw from us our vices and errors, and lay them upon him who has been the cause of them.

Theophylact. But some one has observed that the two coats are the spirit and letter of Scripture, but John advises him that hath these two to instruct the ignorant, and give him at least the letter.

Bede. What great virtue there was in the discourse of the Baptist is manifested by this, that the Publicans, nay even the soldiers, he compelled to seek counsel of him concerning their salvation, as it follows, *But the publicans came*.

Chrysostom. (Hom. in Matt. 24.) Great is the force of virtue that makes the rich seek the way of salvation from the poor, from him that hath nothing.

Bede. He commands them therefore that they exact no more than what was presented to them, as it follows, *And he said unto them, Do no more than what is appointed to you*. But they are called publicans who collect the public taxes, or who are the farmers of the public revenue or public property? Those also who pursue the gain of this world by traffic are denoted by the same titles, all of whom, each in his own sphere, he equally forbids to practise deceit, that so by first keeping themselves from desiring other men's goods, they might at length come to share their own with their neighbours. It follows, *But the soldiers also asked him*. In the justest manner he advises them not to seek gain by falsely accusing those whom they ought to benefit by their protection. Hence it follows, *And he says unto them, Strike no one*, (i. e. violently,) *nor accuse any falsely*, (i. e. by unjustly using arms,) *and be content with your wages*.

Ambrose. Teaching thereby that wages were affixed to military duty, lest men seeking for gain should go about as robbers.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 19.) For by wages he refers to the imperial pay, and the rewards assigned to distinguished actions.

Augustine. (cont. Faust. lib. xxii c. 74.) For he knew that soldiers, when they use their arms, are not homicides, but the ministers of the law; not the avengers of their own injuries, but the defenders of the public safety. Otherwise he might have answered, "Put away your arms, abandon warfare, strike no one, wound no one, destroy no one." For what is it that is blamed in war? Is it that men die, who some time or other must die, that the conquerors might rule in peace? To blame this is the part of timid not religious men. The desire of injury, the cruelty of revenge, a savage and pitiless disposition, the fierceness of rebellion, the lust of power, and such like things are the evils which are justly blamed in wars, which generally for the sake of thereby bringing punishment upon the violence of those who resist, are undertaken and carried on by good men either by command of God or some lawful authority, when they find themselves in that order of things in which their very condition justly obliges them either to command such a thing themselves, or to obey when others command it.

Chrysostom. (Hom. in Matt. 11.) But John's desire when he spoke to the Publicans and soldiers, was to bring them over to a higher wisdom, for which as they were not fitted, he reveals to them commoner truths, lest if he put forward the higher they should pay no attention thereto, and be deprived of the others also.

3:15–17

15. And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts of John, whether he were the Christ, or not;

16. John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

17. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

Origen. It was meet that more deference should be paid to John than to other men, for he lived such as no other man. Wherefore indeed most rightly did they regard him with affection, only they kept not within due bounds; hence it is said, *But while the people were expecting whether he were the Christ*.

Ambrose. Now what could be more absurd than that he who was fancied to be in another should not be believed in his own person? He whom they thought to have come by a woman, is not believed to have come by a virgin; while in fact the sign of the Divine coming was placed in the childbearing of a virgin, not of a woman.

Origen. But love is dangerous when it is uncontrolled. For he who loves any one ought to consider the nature and causes of loving, and not to love more than the object deserves. For if he pass the due measure and bounds of love, both he who loves, and he who is loved, will be in sin.

Greek Expositor. (Metaphrastes.) And hence John gloried not in the estimation in which all held him, nor in any way seemed to desire the deference of others, but embraced the lowest humility. Hence it follows, *John answered*.

Bede. But how could he answer them who in secret thought that he was Christ, except it was that they not only thought, but also (as another Evangelist

declares) sending Priests and Levites to him asked him whether he was the Christ or not?

Ambrose. Or: John saw into the secrets of the heart; but let us remember by whose grace, for it is of the gift of God to reveal things to man, not of the virtue of man, which is assisted by the Divine blessing, rather than capable of perceiving by any natural power of its own. But quickly answering them, he proved that he was not the Christ, for his works were by visible operations. For as man is compounded of two natures, i. e. soul and body, the visible mystery is made holy by the visible, the invisible by the invisible; for by water the body is washed, by the Spirit the soul is cleansed of its stains. It is permitted to us also in the very water to have the sanctifying influence of the Deity breathed upon us. And therefore there was one baptism of repentance, another of grace. The latter was by both water and Spirit, the former by one only; the work of man is to bring forth repentance for his sin, it is the gift of God to pour in the grace of His mystery. Devoid therefore of all envy of Christ's greatness, he declared not by word but by work that he was not the Christ. Hence it follows, *There cometh after me one mightier than I.* In those words, *mightier than I*, he makes no comparison, for there can be none between the Son of God and man, but because there are many mighty, no one is mightier but Christ. So far indeed was he from making comparison, that he adds, *Whose shoes latchet I am not worthy to unloose.*

Augustine. (de Cons. Evang. lib. ii. 12.) Matthew says, *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.* If therefore it is worth while to understand any difference in these expressions, we can only suppose that John said one at one time, another at another, or both together, *To bear his shoes, and to loose the latchet of his shoes*, so that though one Evangelist may have related this, the others that, yet all have related the truth. But if John intended no more when he spoke of the shoes of our Lord but His excellence and his own humility, whether he said *loosing the latchet of the shoes, or bearing them*, they have still kept the same sense who by the mention of shoes have in their own words expressed the same signification of humility.

Ambrose. By the words, *Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear*, he shews that the grace of preaching the Gospel was conferred upon the Apostles, who were shod for the Gospel. (Eph. 6:15.) He seems however to say it, because John frequently represented the Jewish people.

Gregory. (Hom. 7. in Evan.) But John denounces himself as unworthy to loose the latchet of Christ's shoes: as if he openly said, I am not able to disclose the footsteps of my Redeemer, who do not presume unworthily to take unto myself the name of bridegroom, for it was an ancient custom that [a] when a man refused to take to wife her whom he ought, whoever should come to her betrothed by right of kin, was to loose his shoe. Or because shoes are made from the skins of dead animals, our Lord being made flesh appeared as it were with shoes, as taking upon Himself the carcase of our corruption. The latchet of the shoe is the connexion of the mystery. John therefore can not loose the latchet of the shoe, because neither is he able to fathom the mystery of the Incarnation, though he acknowledged it by the Spirit of prophecy.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) And having said that his own baptism was only with water, he next shews the excellence of that baptism which was brought by Christ, adding, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and fire*, signifying by the very metaphor which he uses the abundance of grace. For he says not, "He shall give you the Holy Spirit," but *He shall baptize you.* And again, by the addition of fire, he shews the power of grace. And as Christ calls the grace of the Spirit, *water*, (John 4:14; 7:38.) meaning by water the purity resulting from it, and the abundant consolation which is brought to minds which are capable of receiving Him; so also John, by the word *fire*, expresses the fervour and uprightness of grace, as well as the consuming of sins.

Bede. The Holy Spirit also may be understood by the word fire, for He kindles with love and enlightens with wisdom the hearts which He fills. Hence also the Apostles received the baptism of the Spirit in the appearance of fire. There are some who explain it, that now we are baptized with the Spirit, hereafter we shall be with fire, that as in truth we are now born again to the remission of our sins by water and the Spirit, so then we shall be cleansed from certain lighter sins by the baptism of purifying fire.

Origen. And as John was waiting by the river Jordan for those who came to his baptism, and some he drove away, saying, *Generation of vipers*, but those who confessed their sins he received, so shall the Lord Jesus stand in the fiery stream with the flaming sword, that whoever after the close of this life desires to pass over to Paradise and needs purification, He may baptize him with this laver, and pass him over to paradise, but whoso has not the seal of the former baptisms, him He shall not baptize with the laver of fire.

Basil. (lib. de Spir. Sanct. c. 12.) But because he says, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit*, let no one admit that baptism to be valid in which the name of His Spirit only has been invoked, for we must ever keep undiminished that tradition which has been sealed to us in quickening grace. To add or take away ought thereof excludes from eternal life.

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) By these words then, *He shall baptize with the Holy Spirit*, He signifies the abundance of His grace, the plenteousness of His mercy; but lest any should suppose that while to bestow abundantly is both in the power and will of the Creator, He will have no occasion to punish the disobedient, he adds, *whose fan is in his hand*, shewing that He is not only the rewarder of the righteous, but the avenger of them that speak lies. But the fan expresses the promptitude of His judgment. For not with the process of passing sentence on trial, but in an instant and without any interval he separates those that are to be condemned from the company of those that are to be saved.

Cyril of Alexandria. (Chrys. in Thes. lib. ii. c. 4.) By the following words, *And he shall thoroughly purge his floor*, the Baptist signifies that the Church belongs to Christ as her Lord.

Bede. For by the floor is represented the present Church, in which many are called but few are chosen. The purging of which floor is even now carried on individually, when every perverse offender is either cast out of the Church for his open sins, (by the hands of the Priesthood,) or for his secret sins is after death condemned by Divine judgment. And at the end of the world it will be accomplished universally, when the Son of Man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom every thing that has offended.

Ambrose. By the sign of a fan then the Lord is declared to possess the power of discerning merits, since when the corn is winnowed in the threshing floor, the full cars are separated from the empty by the trial of the wind blowing them. Hence it follows, *And he shall gather the wheat into his barn.* By this comparison, the Lord shews that on the day of judgment He will discern the solid merits and fruits of virtue from the unfruitful lightness of empty boasting and vain deeds, about to place the men of more perfect righteousness in His heavenly mansion. For that is indeed the more perfect fruit which was thought worthy to be like to Him who fell as a grain of wheat, that He might bring forth fruit in abundance. (John 12:24.)

Cyril of Alexandria. But the chaff signifies the trifling and empty, blown about and liable to be carried away by every blast of sin.

Basil. (non occ.) But they are mixed up with those who are worthy of the kingdom of heaven, as the chaff with the wheat. This is not however from consideration of their love of God and their neighbour, nor from their spiritual gifts or temporal blessings.

Origen. Or, because without the wind the wheat and chaff cannot be separated, therefore He has the fan in His hand, which shews some to be chaff,

some wheat; for when you were as the light chaff; (i. e. unbelieving,) temptation shewed you to be what you knew not; but when you shall bravely endure temptation, the temptation will not make you faithful and enduring, but it will bring to light the virtue which was hid in you.

Gregory of Nyssa. (non occ.) But it is well to know, that the treasures, which according to the promises are laid up for those who live honestly, are such as the words of man cannot express, as eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. And the punishments which await sinners bear no proportion to any of those things which now affect the senses. And although some of those punishments are called by our names, yet their difference is very great. For when you hear of *fire*, you are taught to understand something else from the expression which follows, *that is not quenched*, beyond what comes into the idea of other fire.

Gregory. (Mor. 15. sup. Job 20.) The fire of hell is here wonderfully expressed, for our earthly fire is kept up by heaping wood upon it, and cannot live unless supplied with fuel, but on the contrary the fire of hell, though a bodily fire, and burning bodily the wicked who are put into it, is not kept up by wood, but once made remains unquenchable.

3:18–20

18. And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

19. But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him for Herodias his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20. Added yet this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

Origen. John having announced the coming of Christ, was preaching the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and the other things which the Gospel history has handed down to us. But besides these he is declared to have announced others in the following words, *And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.*

Theophylact. For his exhortation was the telling of good things, and therefore is fitly called the Gospel.

Origen. And as in the Gospel according to St. John it is related of Christ that He spoke many other things, so also in this place we must understand Luke to say the same of John the Baptist, since certain things are announced by John too great to be entrusted to writing. But we marvel at John, because among them that are born of women there was not a greater than he, for by his good deeds he had been exalted to so high a fame for virtue, that by many he was supposed to be Christ. But what is much more marvellous he feared not Herod, nor dreaded death, as it follows, *But Herod the tetrarch being reproved by him.*

Eusebius. (non occ.) He is called the tetrarch, to distinguish him from the other Herod, in whose reign Christ was born, and who was king, but this Herod was tetrarch. Now his wife was the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia, but he had sacrilegiously married his brother Philip's wife, though she had offspring by his brother. For those only were allowed to do this whose brothers died without issue. For this the Baptist had censured Herod. First indeed he heard him attentively, for he knew that his words were weighty and full of consolation, but the desire of Herodias compelled him to despise the words of John, and he then thrust him into prison. And so it follows, *And he added this above all, that he shut up John in prison.*

Bede. But John was not imprisoned in those days. According to St. John's Gospel it was not till after some miracles had been performed by our Lord, and after His baptism had been noised abroad; but according to Luke he had been seized beforehand by the redoubled malice of Herod, who, when he saw so many flock to the preaching of John, and the soldiers believing, the publicans repenting, and whole multitudes receiving baptism, on the contrary not only despised John, but having put him in prison, slew him.

Gloss. (ordin.) For before that Luke relates any of the acts of Jesus, he says that John was taken by Herod, to shew that he alone was in an especial manner going to describe those of our Lord's acts, which were performed since the year in which John was taken or put to death.

3:21–22

21. Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,

22. And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.

Ambrose. In a matter which has been related by others, Luke has rightly given us only a summary, and has left more to be understood than expressed in the fact, that our Lord was baptized by John. As it is said, *Now when all were baptized, it came to pass.* Our Lord was baptized not that He might be cleansed by the waters but to cleanse them, that being purified by the flesh of Christ who knew no sin, they might possess the power of baptism.

Gregory Nazianzen. (in Orat. 39.) Christ comes also to baptism perhaps to sanctify baptism, but doubtless to bury the old Adam in water.

Ambrose. But the cause of our Lord's baptism He Himself declares when He says, *Thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness.* But what is righteousness, except that what you would have another do to you, you should first begin yourself, and so by your example encourage others? Let none then avoid the laver of grace, since Christ avoided not the laver of repentance.

Chrysostom. Now there was a Jewish baptism which removed the pollutions of the flesh, not the guilt of the conscience; but our baptism parts us from sin, washes the soul, and gives us largely the outpouring of the Spirit. But John's baptism was more excellent than the Jewish; for it did not bring men to the observance of bodily purifications, but taught them to turn from sin to virtue. But it was inferior to our baptism, in that it conveyed not the Holy Spirit, nor shewed forth the remission which is by grace, for there was a certain end as it were of each baptism. But neither by the Jewish nor our own baptism was Christ baptized, for He needed not the pardon of sins, nor was that flesh destitute of the Holy Spirit which from the very beginning was conceived by the Holy Spirit; He was baptized by the baptism of John, that from the very nature of the baptism, you might know that He was not baptized because He needed the gift of the Spirit. But he says, *being baptized and praying*, that you might consider how fitting to one who has received baptism is constant prayer.

Bede. Because though all sins are forgiven in baptism, not as yet is the weakness of this fleshly substance made strong. For we rejoice at the overwhelming of the Egyptians having now crossed the Red sea, but in the wilderness of worldly living there meet us other foes, who, the grace of Christ directing us, may by our exertions be subdued until we come to our own country.

Chrysostom. But he says, *The heavens opened*, as if till then they had been shut. But now the higher and the lower sheep-fold being brought into one, and there being one Shepherd of the sheep, the heavens opened, and man was incorporated a fellow citizen with the Angels.

Bede. For not then were the heavens opened to Him whose eyes scanned the innermost parts of the heaven, but therein is shewn the virtue of baptism, that when a man comes forth from it the gates of the heavenly kingdom are opened to him, and while his flesh is bathed unharmed in the cold waters, which formerly dreaded their hurtful touch, the flaming sword is extinguished.

Chrysostom. The Holy Spirit descended also upon Christ as upon the Founder of our race, that He might be in Christ first of all who received Him not for Himself, but rather for us. Hence it follows: *And the Holy Spirit descended*. Let not any one imagine that He received Him because He had Him not. For He as God sent Him from above, and as man received Him below. Therefore from Him the Spirit fled down to Him, i. e. from His deity to His humanity.

Augustine. But it is most strange that He should receive the Spirit when He was thirty years old. But as without sin He came to baptism, so not without the Holy Spirit. For if it was written of John, *He shall be filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb*, (Luke 1:15.) what must we believe of the man Christ, the very conception of whose flesh was not carnal but spiritual. Therefore He condescended now to prefigure His body, i. e. the Church, in which the baptized especially receive the Holy Spirit.

Chrysostom. That baptism savoured partly of antiquity, partly of novelty. For that He should receive baptism from a Prophet shewed antiquity, but the Spirit's descent denoted something new.

Ambrose. Now the Spirit rightly shewed Himself in the form of a dove, for He is not seen in His divine substance. Let us consider the mystery why like a dove? Because the grace of baptism requires innocence, that we should be innocent as doves. The grace of baptism requires peace, which under the emblem of an olive branch the dove once brought to that ark which alone escaped the deluge.

Chrysostom. Or to shew the meekness of the Lord, the Spirit now appears in the form of a dove, but at Pentecost like fire, to signify punishment. For when He was about to pardon offences, gentleness was necessary; but having obtained grace, there remaineth for us the time of trial and judgment.

Cyprian. (De unit. Eccles.) the dove is a harmless and pleasant creature, with no bitterness of gall, no fierceness of bite, no violence of rending talons; they love the abodes of men, consort within one home, when they have young nurturing them together, when they fly abroad, hanging side by side upon the wing, leading their life in mutual intercourse, giving with their bills a sign of their peaceful harmony, and fulfilling a law of unanimity in every way.

Chrysostom. Christ indeed had already manifested Himself at His birth by many oracles, but because men would not consult them, He who had in the mean time remained secret, again more clearly revealed Himself in a second birth. For formerly a star in the heavens, now the Father at the waves of Jordan declared Him, and as the Spirit descended upon Him, pouring forth that voice over the head of Him who was baptized, as it follows, *And a voice came from heaven, Thou art my beloved Son.*

Ambrose. We have seen the Spirit, but in a bodily shape, and the Father whom we cannot see we may hear. He is invisible because He is the Father, the Son also is invisible in His divinity, but He wished to manifest Himself in the body. And because the Father did not take the body, He wished therefore to prove to us that He was present in the Son, by saying, *Thou art my Son.*

Athanasius. (De Dec. Nic. Syn.) The holy Scriptures by the name of Son set forth two meanings; one similar to that spoken of in the Gospel, *He gave to them power that they should become the sons of God*; another according to which Isaac is the son of Abraham. Christ is not then simply called a Son of God, but the article is prefixed, that we should understand that He alone is really and by nature the Son; and hence He is said to be the *Only begotten*. For if according to the madness of Arius He is called Son, as they are called who obtain the name through grace, He will seem in no way to differ from us. It remains therefore that in another respect we must confess Christ to be the Son of God, even as Isaac is acknowledged to be the son of Abraham. For that which is naturally begotten of another, and takes not its origin from any thing besides nature, accounts a son. But it is said, Was then the birth of the Son with suffering as of a man? By no means. God since He cannot be divided is without suffering the Father of the Son. Hence He is called the Word of the Father, because neither is the word of man even produced with suffering, and since God is by nature one, He is the Father of one only Son, and therefore it is added, *Beloved*. For when a man has only one son, he loves him very much, but if he becomes father of many, his affection is divided by being distributed.

Athanasius. But as the prophet had before announced the promise of God, saying, *I will send Christ my son*, that promise being now as it were accomplished at Jordan, He rightly adds, *In thee I am well pleased.*

Bede. As if He said, In Thee have I appointed My good pleasure, i. e. to carry on by Thee what seems good to Me.

Gregory. (sup. Ezech. Hom. 8.) Or else, Every one who by repentance corrects any of his actions, by that very repentance shews that he has displeased himself, seeing he amends what he has done. And since the Omnipotent Father spoke of sinners after the manner of men, saying, *It repents me that I have made man*, (Gen. 6:7.) He (so to speak) displeased Himself in the sinners whom He had created. But in Christ alone He pleased Himself, for in Him alone He found no fault that He should blame Himself, as it were, by repentance.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 14.) But the words of Matthew, *This is my beloved Son*, and those of Luke, *Thou art my beloved Son*, convey the same meaning; for the heavenly voice spoke one of these. But Matthew wished to shew that by the words, *This is my beloved Son*, it was meant rather to declare to the hearers, that He was the Son of God. For that was not revealed to Christ which He knew, but they heard it who were present, and for whom the voice came.

3:23–38

23. And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

24. Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

25. Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

26. Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

27. Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

28. Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

29. Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

30. Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

31. Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

32. Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

33. Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,

34. Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

35. Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,

36. Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

37. Which was the son of Mathusala, which was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan,

38. Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

Origen. Having related our Lord's baptism, he next enters upon the generation of the Lord, not bringing it down from the higher to the lower, but beginning with Christ, he carries it up to God Himself. Hence he says, *And Jesus Himself began*. For when He was baptized, and had Himself undergone the mystery of the second birth, then He is said to have begun, that thou also mightest destroy this first birth and be born in the second.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 39.) We must therefore consider who He was who was baptized, and by whom and when: seeing He was pure, baptized by John, and at a time when His miracles had begun, that we might thence derive the lesson of purifying ourselves beforehand, and of embracing humility, and of not beginning to preach until the maturity of our spiritual and natural life. The first of these was said for their sakes who are receiving baptism; for although the gift of baptism brings remission, yet we must fear lest we return again to our vomit. The second is pointed at those who exalt themselves against the stewards of the mysteries, whom they may excel in rank. The third was uttered for those who trust in their youth, and imagine that any age is fit for promotion and teaching. Jesus is cleansed, and dost thou despise purification? By John, and dost thou say ought against thy teacher. At thirty years old, but dost thou in teaching precede thy elders? But the example of Daniel and the like are ready in thy mouth, for every guilty person is ready with an answer. But that is not the law of the Church which seldom happens, as neither does a single swallow make the spring.

Chrysostom. Or, He waited accomplishing the whole law until that age which takes in every sin, that none might say that He abrogated the law because He was not able to fulfil it.

Greek Expositor. (Severus.) For this reason also He came at thirty years to be baptized, to shew that spiritual regeneration makes men perfect as far as regards their spiritual life.

Bede. The thrice ten years also which our Saviour had passed when He was baptized might intimate also the mystery of our baptism, because of the faith in the Trinity, and the obedience to the Decalogue.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 40.) Still must a child be baptized if necessity demands it. For it is better to be insensibly sanctified, than to pass from this life unsealed. But you will say, Christ is baptized at thirty years old, and He was God, but thou biddest us to hasten our baptism. In that thou saidst God, the objection was done away: He needed no cleansing, nor was any danger hanging over Him while He put off His baptism. But with thee it extends to no slight calamity, if thou passest from this life born in corruption, but not if thou hast put on the robe of incorruption. And truly it is a blessed thing to keep unsullied the clean robe of baptism, but it is better at times to be slightly stained, than to be altogether devoid of grace.

Cyril of Alexandria. (Glaph. in Exod. lib. 1.) Although in truth Christ had no father according to the flesh, yet some fancied he had a father. Hence it follows, *As was supposed the son of Joseph.*

Ambrose. Rightly *as was supposed*, since in reality He was not, but was supposed to be so, because Mary who was espoused to Joseph was His mother. But we might doubt why the descent of Joseph is described rather than that of Mary, (seeing that Mary brought forth Christ of the Holy Spirit, while Joseph seemed to be out of the line of our Lord's descent,) were we not informed of the custom of the Holy Scripture, which always seeks the origin of the husband, and especially in this case, since in Joseph's descent we also find that of Mary. For Joseph being a just man took a wife really from his

own tribe and country, and so at the time of the taxing Joseph went up from the family and country of David to be taxed with Mary his wife. She who gives in the returns from the same family and country, shews herself to be of that family and country. Hence He goes on in the descent of Joseph, and adds, *Who was the son of Eli*. But let us consider the fact, that St. Matthew makes Jacob, who was the father of Joseph, to be son of Nathan, but Luke says that Joseph (to whom Mary was espoused) was the son of Eli. How then could there be two fathers, (namely, Eli and Jacob,) to one man.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Carm. 18.) But some say that there is one succession from David to Joseph, which each Evangelist relates under different names. But this is absurd, since at the beginning of this genealogy, two brothers come in Nathan and Salomon, from whom the lines are carried in different ways.

Eusebius. Let us then more carefully explain the meaning of the words themselves. For if when Matthew affirmed Joseph to be the son of Jacob, Luke had in like manner affirmed that Joseph was the son of Eli, there would be some dispute. But seeing the case is that Matthew gives his opinion, Luke repeats the common opinion of many, not his own, saying, *as was supposed*, I do not think that there is any room for doubt. For since there were among the Jews different opinions of the genealogy of Christ, and yet all traced Him up to David because to him the promises were made, while many affirmed that Christ would come through Solomon and the other kings, some shunned this opinion because of the many crimes related of their kings, and because Jeremiah said of Jechonias that "a man should not rise of his seed to sit on the throne of David." (Jer. 22:30.) This last view Luke takes, though conscious that Matthew gives the real truth of the genealogy. This is the first reason. The next is a deeper one. For Matthew when he began to write of the things before the conception of Mary and the birth of Jesus in the flesh, very fitly as in a history commences with the ancestry in the flesh, and descending from thence deduces His generation from those who went before. For when the Word of God became flesh, He descended. But Luke hastens forward to the regeneration which takes place in baptism, and then gives another succession of families, and rising up from the lowest to the highest, keeps out of sight those sinners of whom Matthew makes mention, (because that he who is born again in God is separated from his guilty parents, being made the son of God,) and relates those who have led a virtuous life in the sight of God. For thus it was said to Abraham, *Thou shalt set out to thy fathers*, (Gen. 15:15.) not fathers in the flesh, but in God, on account of their likeness in virtue. To him therefore fore who is born in God he ascribes parents who are according to God on account of this resemblance in character.

Pseudo-Aug. (Aug. Quæst. Nov. ac Vet. Test. 56.) Or in another way; Matthew descends from David through Salomon to Joseph: but Luke beginning from Eli, who was in the line of our Saviour, ascends through the line of Nathan the son of David, and joins the tribes of Eli and Joseph, shewing that they are both of the same family, and thereby that the Saviour was not only the Son of Joseph, but also of Eli. For by the same reason by which the Saviour is called the son of Joseph, he is also the son of Eli, and of all the rest who are of the same tribe. Hence that which the Apostle says, *Of whom are the fathers, and from whom Christ came according to the flesh*. (Rom. 9:5.)

Augustine. (Quæst. Ev. ii. qu. 5.) Or there occur three reasons, by one of which the Evangelist was led. For either one Evangelist has mentioned the father by whom Joseph was begotten, but the other his maternal grandfather, or some one of his ancestors. Or one of the fathers mentioned was the natural father of Joseph, the other his father who had adopted him. Or after the manner of the Jews, when a man has died without children, the next of kin taking his wife ascribes to his dead kinsman the son whom he has himself begotten.

Ambrose. For it is related that Matthas, who was descended from Salomon, begat Jacob as his son, and died leaving his wife living, whom Melchi took unto him as wife, and from her Eli was born. Again, Eli, when his brother Jacob died without children, was joined to his brother's wife, and begot a son Joseph, who according to law is called the son of Jacob, since Eli raised up seed to his deceased brother, according to the order of the ancient law. (Deut. 25:5.)

Bede. Or else, Jacob, taking the wife of his brother Eli who had died without children according to the command of the law, begot Joseph, by natural parentage his own son, but by the ordinance of the law the son of Eli.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 3.) It is most probable that Luke took the origin by adoption, as not being willing to say that Joseph, was begotten by him whose son he related him to be. For more easily is a man said to be his son by whom he was adopted, than to be begotten by him from whose flesh he was not born. But Matthew saying, "Abraham begat Isaac, and Isaac begat Jacob," and continuing in the word "begat," until at last he says, but "Jacob begat Joseph," has sufficiently expressed that he has carried through the succession of the fathers, to that father by whom Joseph was not adopted, but begotten. Although even supposing that Luke should say that Joseph was begotten by Eli, neither ought that word to perplex us. For it is not absurd to say that a man has begotten not in the flesh but in love the Son whom he has adopted. But rightly has Luke taken the origin by adoption, for by adoption are we made the sons of God, by believing on the Son of God, but by His birth in the flesh, the Son of God has rather for our sakes become the Son of man.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 31, in Ep. ad Rom.) But because this part of the Gospel consists of a series of names, men think there is nothing valuable to be derived therefrom. Lest then we should feel this, let us try to examine every step. For from the mere name we may extract an abundant treasure, for names are indicative of many things. For they savour of the Divine mercy and the offerings of thanks by women, who when they obtained sons gave a name significant of the gift.

Gloss. (interlin.) By interpretation then Eli means, "My God," or "climbing," *Who was the son of Matthat*, i. e. "forgiving sins." *Who was the son of Levi*, i. e. "being added."

Ambrose. Luke rightly thought, seeing that he could not embrace more of the sons of Jacob, lest he should seem to be wandering from the line of descent in a superfluous course, that the ancient names of the Patriarchs though occurring in others far later, Joseph, Judah, Simeon, and Levi, should not be omitted. For we recognise in these four kinds of virtue; in Judah, the mystery of our Lord's Passion prophesied by figure; in Joseph, an example of chastity going before; in Simeon, the punishment of injured modesty; in Levi, the priestly office. Hence it follows, *Who was the son of Melchi*, i. e. "my King." *Who was the son of Janna*, i. e. "a right hand." *Who was the son of Joseph*, i. e. "growing up;" but this was a different Joseph. *Who was the son of Mattathias*, i. e. "the gift of God," or "sometimes." *Who was the son of Amos*, i. e. "loading, or he loaded." *Who was the son of Naum*, i. e. "help me." *Who was the son of Matthat*, i. e. "desire." *Who was the son of Mattathias*, as above. *Who was the son of Simei*, i. e. "obedient." *Who was the son of Joseph*, i. e. "increase." *Who was the son of Judah*, i. e. "confessing." *Joanna*, "the Lord, his grace," or "the gracious Lord." *Resa*, "merciful." *Zorobabel*, "chief or master of Babylon." *Salathiel*, "God my petition." *Neri*, "my lanthern." *Melchi*, "my kingdom." *Addi*, "strong or violent." *Cosam*, "divining." *Her*, "watching, or watch, or of skins." *Who was the son of Jesus*, i. e. "Saviour." *Eliezer*, i. e. "God my helper." *Joarim*, i. e. "God exalting, or, is exalting." *Matthat*, as above. *Levi*, as above. *Simeon*, i. e. "He has heard the sadness, or the sign." *Juda*, as above. *Joseph*, as above. *Jonah*, a dove, or wailing. *Eliachim*, i. e. "the resurrection of God." *Melchi*, i. e. "his king." *Menan*, i. e. "my bowels." *Mattathias*, i. e. "gift." *Nathan*, i. e. "He gave, or, of giving."

Ambrose. But by Nathan we perceive expressed the dignity of Prophecy, that as Christ Jesus alone fulfilled all things, in each of His ancestors different

kinds of virtue might precede Him. It follows, *Who was the son of David.*

Origen. The Lord descending into the world took upon Him the person of all sinners, and was willing to be born of the stock of Solomon, (as Matthew relates,) whose sins have been written down, and of the rest, many of whom did evil in the sight of God. But when He ascended, and is described as being born a second time in baptism, (as Luke relates,) He is not born through Salomon, but Nathan, who reproves the father for the death of Uriah, and the birth of Solomon.

Augustine. (Retract. i. c. 26.) But it must be confessed that a prophet of this same name reproves David, that he might be thought to be the same man, whereas he was different.

Gregory Nazianzen. (ubi sup.) From David upwards according to each Evangelist there is an unbroken line of descent; as it follows, *Who was the son of Jesse.*

Gloss. (ubi sup.) David is interpreted, "with a mighty arm, strong in fight." *Obith*, i. e. "slavery." *Booz*, i. e. "strong." *Salmon*, i. e. "capable of feeling, or peace-making." *Naasson*, i. e. "augury, or belonging to serpents." *Aminadab*, "the people being willing." *Aram*, i. e. "upright, or lofty." *Esrom*, i. e. "an arrow." *Phares*, i. e. "division." *Judah*, i. e. "confessing." *Who was the son of Jacob*, i. e. "supplanted." *Isaac*, i. e. "laughing or joy." *Abraham*, i. e. "the father of many nations, or the people."

Chrysostom. (Hom. in Matt 1.) Matthew, who wrote as for the Jews, had no further object than to shew that Christ proceeded from Abraham and David, for this was most grateful to the Jews. Luke however, as speaking to all men in common, carried his account beyond as far even as Adam. Hence it follows, *Who was the son of Thara.*

Gloss. (ubi sup.) Which is interpreted, "finding out," or "wickedness." *Nachor*, i. e. "the light rested." *Sarug*, i. e. "correction," or "holding the reins," or "perfection." *Ragan*, i. e. "sick," or "feeding." *Phares*, i. e. "dividing," or "divided." *Heber*, i. e. "passing over." *Sala*, i. e. "taking away." *Canaan*, i. e. "lamentation," or "their possession."

Bede. The name and generation of Cainan, according to the Hebrew reading, is found neither in Genesis, nor in the Chronicles, (dierum Vulg. verbis.) but Arphaxad is stated to have begot Sala his son, without any one intervening. Know then that Luke borrowed this generation from the Septuagint, where it is written, that Arphaxad at a hundred and thirty-five years old begot Cainan, but he at a hundred and thirty years begot Sala. It follows, *Who was the son of Arphaxad.*

Gloss. (ubi sup.) i. e. "healing the laying waste." *Sem*, i. e. "a name," or being "named." *Who was the son of Noe*, i. e. "rest."

Ambrose. The mention of just Noah ought not to be omitted among our Lord's generations, that as our Lord was born the builder of His Church, He might seem to have sent Noah beforehand, the author of His race, who had before founded the Church under the type of an ark. *Who was the son of Lamech.*

Gloss. (ubi sup.) i. e. "humility, or striking, or struck, or humble." *Who was the son of Mathusalem*, i. e. "the sending forth of death," or "he died," also "he asked."

Ambrose. His years are numbered beyond the deluge, that since Christ is the only one whose life experiences no age, in His ancestors also He might seem to have felt not the deluge. *Who was the son of Enoch.* And here is a manifest declaration of our Lord's piety and divinity, since our Lord neither experienced death, and returned to heaven, the founder of whose race was taken up into heaven. Whence it is plain that Christ could not die, but was willing that His death should profit us. And Enoch indeed was taken, that his heart might not change by wickedness, but the Lord, whom the wickedness of the world could not change, returned to that place whence He had come by the greatness of His own nature.

Bede. But rightly rising up from the baptized Son of God to God the Father, he places Enoch in the seventy-seventh step, who, having put off death, was translated unto Paradise, that he might signify that those, who by the grace of adoption of sons are born again of water and the Holy Spirit, are in the mean time (after the dissolution of the body) to be received into eternal rest, for the number seventy, because of the seventh of the sabbath, signifies the rest of those who, the grace of God assisting them, have fulfilled the decalogue of the aw.

Gloss. Enoch is interpreted "dedication." *Jared*, i. e. descending or "holding together." *Malaleleel*, i. e. "the praised of God," or" praising God." *Cainan*, as above. *Enos*, i. e. "man," or "despairing," or "violent." *Seth*, i. e. "placing," "settling," "he hath placed." Seth, the last son of Adam, is not omitted, that as there were two generations of people, it might be signified under a figure that Christ was to be reckoned rather in the last than the first.

It follows, *Who was the son of Adam.*

Gloss. (ubi sup.) Which is "man," or "of the earth," or "needy." *Who was the son of God.*

Ambrose. What could better agree than that the holy generation should commence from the Son of God, and be carried up even to the Son of God; and that he who was created should precede in a figure, in order that he who was born might follow in substance, so that he who was made after the image of God might go before, for whose sake the image of God was to descend. For Luke thought that the origin of Christ should be referred to God, because God is the true progenitor of Christ, or the Father according to the true birth, or the Author of the mystical gift according to baptism and regeneration, and therefore he did not from the first begin to describe His generation, but not till after he had unfolded His baptism, that both by nature and by grace, he might declare Him to be the Son of God. But what more evident sign of His divine generation than that when about to speak of it St. Luke introduces first the Father, saying, *Thou art my beloved Son?*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 3.) He sufficiently declared by this that he called not Joseph the son of Eli because he was begotten by him, but rather because he was adopted by him, for he has called also Adam himself son, since though made by God, yet by grace (which he forfeited by sin) he was placed as a son in paradise.

Theophylact. For this reason he closes the generations in God, that we may learn that those fathers who intervene, Christ will raise up to God, and make them sons of God, and that it might be believed also that the birth of Christ was without seed; as if he said, If thou believest not that the second Adam was made without seed, you must come to the first Adam, and you will find that he was made by God without seed.

Augustine. (ubi sup. c. 4.) Matthew indeed wished to set forth God descending to our mortality; accordingly at the beginning of the Gospel he recounted the generations from Abraham to the birth of Christ in a descending scale. But Luke, not at the beginning, but after the baptism of Christ, relates the

generation not descending but ascending, as if marking out rather the high priest in the expiation of sins, of whom John bore testimony, saying, *Behold, who taketh away the sins of the world*. But by ascending he comes to God, to whom we are reconciled, being cleansed and expiated.

Ambrose. Nor do the Evangelists seem so to differ who have followed the old order, nor can you wonder if from Abraham down to Christ there are more successions according to Luke, fewer according to Matthew, since you must admit the line to have been traced through different persons. But it might be that some men have passed a very long life, but the men of the next generation have died at an early age, since we see how many old men live to see their grandchildren, while others depart as soon as they have sons born to them.

Augustine. (Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 6.) But most fitly with regard to our baptized Lord does Luke reckon the generations through seventy-seven persons. For both the ascent to God is expressed, to whom we are reconciled by the abolition of sins, and by baptism is brought to man the remission of all his sins, which are signified by that number. For eleven times seven are seventy-seven. But by the tenth number is meant perfect happiness. Hence it is plain that the going beyond the tenth marks the sin of one through pride coveting to have more. But this is said to be seven times to signify that the transgression was caused by the moving of man. For by the third number the immortal part of man is represented, but by the fourth the body. But motion is not expressed in numbers, as when we say, one, two, three; but when we say, once, twice, thrice. And so by seven times eleven, is signified a transgression wrought by man's action.

CHAP. 4

1. And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2. Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3. And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4. And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Theophylact. Christ is tempted after His baptism, shewing us that after we are baptized, temptations await us. Hence it is said, *But Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. God said in times past, *My Spirit shall not always abide in men, for that they are flesh.* (Gen. 6:3. Vulg.) But now that we have been enriched with the gift of regeneration by water and the Spirit, we are become partakers of the Divine nature by participation of the Holy Spirit. But the first-born among many brethren first received the Spirit, who Himself also is the giver of the Spirit, that we through Him might also receive the grace of the Holy Spirit.

Origen. When therefore you read that Jesus was *full of the Holy Spirit*, and it is written in the Acts concerning the Apostles, that they were filled with the Holy Spirit, you must not suppose that the Apostles were equal to the Saviour. For as if you should say, *These vessels are full of wine or oil*, you would not thereby affirm them to be equally full, so Jesus and Paul were full of the Holy Spirit, but Paul's vessel was far less than that of Jesus, and yet each was filled according to its own measure. Having then received baptism, the Saviour, being full of the Holy Spirit, which came upon Him from heaven in the form of a dove, was led by the Spirit, because, *as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God*, (Rom. 8:14.) but He was above all, especially the Son of God.

Bede. That there might be no doubt by what Spirit He was led, while the other Evangelists say, *into the wilderness*, Luke has purposely added, *And he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness for forty days*. That no unclean spirit should be thought to have prevailed against Him, who being full of the Holy Spirit did whatever He wished.

Greek Expositor. (Severus.) But if *we* order our lives according to our own will, how was He led about unwillingly? Those words then, *He was led by the Spirit*, have some meaning of this kind: He led of His own accord that kind of life, that He might present an opportunity to the tempter.

Basil. For not by word provoking the enemy, but by His actions rousing him, He seeks the wilderness. For the devil delights in the wilderness, he is not wont to go into the cities, the harmony of the citizens troubles him.

Ambrose. He was led therefore into the wilderness, to the intent that He might provoke the devil, for if the one had not contended, the other it seems had not conquered. In a mystery, it was to deliver that Adam from exile who was cast out of Paradise into the wilderness. By way of example, it was to shew us that the devil envies us, whenever we strive after better things; and that then we must use caution, lest the weakness of our minds should lose us the grace of the mystery. Hence it follows: *And he was tempted of the devil.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Behold, He is among the wrestlers, who as God awards the prizes. He is among the crowned, who crowns the heads of the saints.

Gregory. (3. Mor. sup. Job 2.) Our enemy was however unable to shake the purpose of the Mediator between God and men. For He condescended to be tempted outwardly, yet so that His soul inwardly, resting in its divinity, remained unshaken.

Origen. But Jesus is tempted by the devil forty days, and what the temptations were we know not. They were perhaps omitted, as being greater than could be committed to writing.

Basil. Or, the Lord remained for forty days untempted, for the devil knew that He fasted, yet hungered not, and dared not therefore approach Him. Hence it follows: *And he eat nothing in those days*. He fasted indeed, to shew that He who would gird Himself for struggles against temptation must be temperate and sober.

Ambrose. There are three things which united together conduce to the salvation of man; The Sacrament, The Wilderness, Fasting. No one who has not rightly contended receives a crown, but no one is admitted to the contest of virtue, except first being washed from the stains of all his sins, he is consecrated with the gift of heavenly grace.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 40.) He fasted in truth forty days, eating nothing. (For He was God.) But we regulate our fasting according to our strength, although the zeal of some persuades them to fast beyond what they are able.

Basil. (ex Const. Mon.) But we must not however so use the flesh, that through want of food our strength should waste away, nor that by excess of mortification our understandings wax dull and heavy. Our Lord therefore, once performed this work, but during this whole succeeding time He governed His body with due order, and so in like manner did Moses and Elias.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 13. in Matt.) But very wisely, He exceeded not their number of days, lest indeed He should be thought to have come in appearance only, and not to have really received the flesh, or lest the flesh should seem to be something beyond human nature.

Ambrose. But mark the mystical number of days. For you remember that for forty days the waters of the deep were poured forth, and by sanctifying a fast of that number of days, He brings before us the returning mercies of a calmer sky. By a fast of so many days also, Moses earned for himself the understanding of the law. Our fathers being for so many years settled in the wilderness, obtained the food of Angels.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 4.) Now that number is a sacrament of our time and labour, in which under Christ's discipline we contend against the devil, for it signifies our temporal life. For the seasons of the year run in courses of four, but forty contains four tens. Again, those ten are completed by the number one successively advancing up to four. This plainly shews that the fast of forty days, i. e. the humiliation of the soul, the Law and the Prophets have consecrated by Moses and Elias, the Gospel by the fast of our Lord Himself.

Basil. (ubi sup.) But because not to suffer hunger is above the nature of man, our Lord took upon Himself the feeling of hunger, and submitted Himself

as it pleased Him to human nature, both to do and to suffer those things which were His own. Hence it follows: *And those days being ended, he was a hungered.* Not forced to that necessity which overpowers nature, but as if provoking the devil to the conflict. For the devil, knowing that wherever hunger is there is weakness, sets about to tempt Him, and as the deviser or inventer of temptations, Christ permitting him tries to persuade Him to satisfy His appetite with the stones. As it follows; *But the devil said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, command these stones that they be made bread.*

Ambrose. There are three especial weapons which we are taught the devil is wont to arm himself with, that he may wound the soul of man. One is of the appetite, another of boasting, the third ambition. He began with that wherewith he had already conquered, namely, Adam. Let us then beware of the appetite, let us beware of luxury, for it is a weapon of the devil. But what mean his words, *If thou art the Son of God*, unless he had known that the Son would come, but supposed Him not to have come from the weakness of His body. He first endeavours to find Him out, then to tempt Him. He professes to trust Him as God, then tries to deceive Him as man.

Origen. When a father is asked by his son for bread, he does not give him a stone for bread, but the devil like a crafty and deceitful foe gives stones for bread.

Basil. (ubi sup.) He tried to persuade Christ to satisfy His appetite with stones, i. e. to shift his desire from the natural food to that which was beyond nature or unnatural.

Origen. I suppose also that even now at this very time the devil shews a stone to men that he may tempt them to speak, saying to them, *Command this stone to be made bread.* If thou seest the heretics devouring their lying doctrines as if they were bread, know that their teaching is a stone which the devil shews them.

Basil. (ubi sup.) But Christ while He vanquishes temptation, banishes not hunger from our nature, as though that were the cause of evils, (which is rather the preservative of life, but confining nature within its proper bounds, shews of what kind its nourishment is, as follows; *And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone.*

Theophylact. As if He said, Not by bread alone is human nature sustained, but the word of God is sufficient to support the whole nature of man. Such was the food of the Israelites when they gathered manna during the space of forty years, and when they delighted in the taking of quails. (Exod. 16:15, Numb. 11:32) By the Divine counsel Elias had the crows to entertain him; (1 Kings 17:6) Elisha fed his companions on the herbs of the field. (2 Kings 4:44.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Or, our earthly body is nourished by earthly food, but the reasonable soul is strengthened by the Divine Word, to the right ordering of the spirit.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Poem. Mor. x. 624.) For the body nourishes not our immaterial nature.

Gregory of Nyssa. (in Eccles. Hom. 5.) Virtue then is not sustained by bread, nor by flesh does the soul keep itself in health and vigour, but by other banquets than these is the heavenly life fostered, and increased. The nourishment of the good man is chastity, his bread, wisdom, his herbs, justice, his drink, freedom from passion, his delight, (εὐφροσύνη quasi ex εὐφρόνειν) to be rightly wise.

Ambrose. You see then what kind of arms He uses to defend man against the assaults of spiritual wickedness, and the allurements of the appetite. He does not exert His power as God, (for how had that profited me,) but as man He summons to Himself a common aid, that while intent upon the food of divine reading He may neglect the hunger of the body, and gain the nourishment of the word. For he who seeks after the word cannot feel the want of earthly bread; for divine things doubtless make up for the loss of human. At the same time by saying, *Man lives not by bread alone*, He shews that man was tempted, that is, our flesh which He assumed, not His own divinity.

4:5–8

5. And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

6. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Theophylact. The enemy had first assailed Christ by the temptation of the appetite, as also he did Adam. He next tempts Him with the desire of gain or covetousness, shewing Him all the kingdoms of the world. Hence it follows, *And the devil taking him up.*

Gregory. (Hom. 6. in Ev.) What marvel that He permitted Himself to be led by the devil into the mountains, who even endured to be crucified in His own body?

Theophylact. But how did the devil shew Him all the kingdoms of the world? Some say that he presented them to Him in imagination, but I hold that he brought them before Him in visible form and appearance.

Titus Bostrensis. Or, the devil described the world in language, and as he thought brought it vividly before our Lord's mind as though it were a certain house.

Ambrose. Truly in a moment of time, the kingdoms of this world are described. For here it is not so much the rapid glance of sight which is signified as is declared the frailty of mortal power. For in a moment all this passes by, and oftentimes the glory of this world has vanished before it has arrived. It follows, *And he said unto him, I will give thee all this power.*

Titus Bostrensis. (non occ.) He lied in two respects. For he neither had to give, nor could he give that which he had not; he gains possession of nothing, but is an enemy reduced to fight.

Ambrose. For it is elsewhere said, that all power is from God. (Rom. 13:1.) Therefore from God's hands comes the disposal of power, the lust of power is from the evil one; power is not itself evil, but he who evilly uses it. What then; is it good to exercise power, to desire honour? Good if it is bestowed

upon us, not if it is seized. We must distinguish however in this good itself. There is one good use of the world, another of perfect virtue. It is good to seek God; it is a good thing that the desire of becoming acquainted with God should be hindered by no worldly business. But if he who seeks God, is from the weakness of the flesh, and the narrowness of his mind, often tempted, how much more is he exposed who seeks the world? We are taught then to despise ambition, because it is subject to the power of the devil. But honour abroad is followed by danger at home, and in order to rule others a man is first their servant, and prostrates himself in obedience that he may be rewarded with honours, and the higher he aspires the lower he bends with feigned humility; whence he adds, *If thou will fall down and worship me.*

Cyril of Alexandria. And dost thou, whose lot is the unquenchable fire, promise to the Lord of all that which is His own? Didst thou think to have Him for thy worshipper, from dread of whom the whole creation trembles?

Origen. Or, to view the whole in another light. Two kings are earnestly contending for a kingdom; The king of sin who reigneth over sinners, that is, the devil; The king of righteousness who ruleth the righteous, that is, Christ. The devil, knowing that Christ had come to take away his kingdom, shews Him all the kingdoms of the world; not the kingdoms of the Persians and of the Medes, but his own kingdom whereby he reigned in the world, whereby some are under the dominion of fornication, others of covetousness. And he shews Him them in a moment of time, that is, in the present course of time, which is but a moment in comparison of eternity. For the Saviour needed not to be shewn for any longer time the affairs of this world, but as soon as He turned His eyes to look, He beheld sins reigning, and men made slaves to vice. The devil therefore says unto Him, Camest Thou to contend with me for dominion? Worship me, and behold I give Thee the kingdom I hold. Now the Lord would indeed reign, but being Righteousness itself, would reign without sin; and would have all nations subject to Him, that they might obey the truth, but would not so reign over others as that He Himself should be subject to the devil. Hence it follows, *And Jesus answering said unto him, It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God.*

Bede. The devil saying to our Saviour, *If thou wilt fall down and worship me*, receives answer that he himself ought rather to worship Christ as his Lord and God.

Cyril of Alexandria. (in Thes. 32.) But how comes it that the Son (if as the heretics say a created being) is worshipped? What charge can be brought against those who served the creature and not the Creator, if the Son (according to them a created being) we are to worship as God?

Origen. Or else, All these, he says, I would have subject to me, that they might worship the Lord God, and serve Him alone. But dost thou wish sin to begin from Me, which I came hither to destroy?

Cyril of Alexandria. This command touched him to the quick; for before Christ's coming he was every where worshipped. But the law of God casting him down from his usurped dominion, establishes the worship of Him alone who is really God.

Bede. But some one may ask how this injunction agrees with the word of the Apostle, which says, *Beloved, serve one another.* (Gal. 5:13.) In the Greek, δουλεία signifies a common service, (i. e. given either to God or man,) according to which we are bid to serve one another; but λατρεία is the service due to the worship of the Deity, with which we are bid to serve God alone.

4:9–13

9. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

10. For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee:

11. And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13. And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

Ambrose. The next weapon he uses is that of boasting, which always causes the offender to fall down; for they who love to boast of the glory of their virtue descend from the stand and vantage ground of their good deeds. Hence it is said, *And he led him to Jerusalem.*

Origen. He followed evidently as a wrestler, gladly setting out to meet the temptation, and saying, as it were, Lead me where you will, and you will find me the stronger in every thing.

Ambrose. It is the fate of boasting, that while a man thinks he is climbing higher, he is by his pretension to lofty deeds brought low. Hence it follows, *And he said unto him, If thou art the Son of God, throw thyself down.*

Athanasius. (non occ.) The devil entered not into a contest with God, (for he durst not, and therefore said, *If thou art the Son of God,*) but he contended with man whom once he had power to deceive.

Ambrose. That is truly the devil's language, which seeks to cast down the soul of man from the high ground of its good deeds, while he shews at the same time both his weakness and malice, for he can injure no one that does not first cast himself down. For he who forsaking heavenly things pursues earthly, rushes as it were wilfully down the self-sought precipice of a falling life. As soon then as the devil perceived his dart blunted, he who had subdued all men to his own power, began to think he had to deal with more than man. But Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, and often from the Holy Scriptures weaves his mesh for the faithful: hence it follows, *It is written, He shall give, &c.*

Origen. Whence knowest thou, Satan, that those things are written? Hast thou read the Prophets, or the oracles of God? Thou hast read them indeed, but not that thyself mightest be the better for the reading, but that from the mere letter thou mightest slay them who are friends to the letter. (2 Cor. 3:6.) Thou knowest that if thou wert to speak from His other books, thou wouldest not deceive.

Ambrose. Let not the heretic entrap thee by bringing examples from the Scriptures. The devil makes use of the testimony of the Scriptures not to teach but to deceive.

Origen. But mark how wily he is even in this testimony. For he would fain throw a slur upon the glory of the Saviour, as though He needed the assistance

of angels, and would stumble were He not supported by their hands. But this was said not of Christ, but of the saints generally; He needs not the aid of angels, Who is greater than angels. But let this teach thee, Satan, that the angels would stumble did not God sustain them; and thou stumblest, because thou refusest to believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God. But why art thou silent as to what follows, *Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk*, (Ps. 91:13.) except that thou art the basilisk, thou art the dragon and the lion?

Ambrose. But the Lord, to prevent the thought that those things which had been prophesied of Him were fulfilled according to the devil's will, and not by the authority of His own divine power, again so foils his cunning, that he who had alleged the testimony of Scripture, should by Scripture himself be overthrown. Hence it follows, *And Jesus answering said, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.*

Chrysostom. For it is of the devil to cast one's self into dangers, and try whether God will rescue us.

Cyril of Alexandria. God gives not help to those who tempt Him, but to those who believe on Him. Christ therefore did not shew His miracles to them that tempted Him, but said to them, *An evil generation seeketh a sign, and no sign shall be given to them.* (Mat. 12:39.)

Chrysostom. But mark how the Lord, instead of being troubled, condescends to dispute from the Scriptures with the wicked one, that thou, as far as thou art able, mightest become like Christ. The devil knew the arms of Christ, beneath which he sunk. Christ took him captive by meekness, He overcame him by humility. Do thou also, when thou seest a man who has become a devil coming to meet thee, subdue him in like manner. Teach thy soul to conform its words to those of Christ. For as a Roman judge, who on the bench refuses to hear the reply of one who knows not how to speak as he does; so also Christ, except thou speakest after His manner, will neither hear thee nor protect thee.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) In lawful contests the battle is terminated either when the adversary surrenders of his own accord to the conqueror, or is defeated in three falls, according to the rules of the art of fighting. Hence it follows, *And all the temptation being completed, &c.*

Ambrose. He would not have said that all the temptation was ended, had there not been in the three temptations which have been described the materials for every crime; for the causes of temptations are the causes of desire, namely, the delight of the flesh, the pomp of vain-glory, greediness of power.

Athanasius. (non occ.) The enemy came to Him as man, but not finding in Him the marks of his ancient seed, he departed.

Ambrose. You see then that the devil is not obstinate on the field, is wont to give way to true virtue; and if he ceases not to hate, he yet dreads to advance, for so he escapes a more frequent defeat. As soon then as he heard the name of God, he retired (it is said) for a season, for afterwards he comes not to tempt, but to fight openly.

Theophylact. Or, having tempted Him in the desert with pleasure, he retires from Him until the crucifixion, when he was about to tempt Him with sorrow.

Maximus. (lib. ad. piet. ex. 12.) Or the devil had prompted Christ in the desert to prefer the things of the world to the love of God. The Lord commanded him to leave Him, (which itself was a mark of Divine love.) It was afterwards then enough to make Christ appear the false advocate of love to His neighbours, and therefore while He was teaching the paths of life, the devil stirred up the Gentiles and Pharisees to lay traps for Him that He might be brought to hate them. But the Lord, from the feeling of love which He had towards them, exhorted, reproved, ceased not to bestow mercy upon them.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 6.) The whole of this narrative Matthew relates in a similar manner, but not in the same order. It is uncertain therefore which took place first, whether the kingdoms of the earth were first shewn unto Him, and He was afterwards taken up to the pinnacle of the temple; or whether this came first, and the other afterwards. It matters little however which, as long as it is clear that they all took place.

Maximus. (ut sup.) But the reason why one Evangelist places this event first, and another that, is because vain-glory and covetousness give birth in turn to one another.

Origen. But John, who had commenced his Gospel from God, saying, *In the beginning was the Word*, did not describe the temptation of the Lord, because God can not be tempted, of whom he wrote. But because in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke the human generations are given, and in Mark it is man who is tempted, therefore Matthew, Luke, and Mark have described the temptation of the Lord.

4:14–21

14. And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

16. And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

17. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

18. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

19. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20. And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21. And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.

Origen. The Lord having overcome the tempter, power was added to Him, i. e. as far as regards the manifestation of it. Hence it is said, *And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit.*

Bede. By the power of the Spirit he means shewing forth of miracles.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now He performed miracles not from any external power, and from having as it were the acquired grace of the Holy Spirit, as other saints, but rather as being by nature the Son of God, and partaking of all things which are the Father's, He exercises as by His own power and operation that grace which is of the Holy Spirit. But it was right that from that time He should become known, and that the mystery of His humanity should shine forth among those who were of the seed of Israel. It therefore follows, *And his fame went out.*

Bede. And because wisdom belongs to teaching, but power to works, both are joined here, as it follows, *And he taught in the synagogue.*

Synagogue, which is a Greek word, is rendered in Latin *congregatio*. By this name then the Jews were accustomed to call not only the gathering together of people, but also the house where they met together to hear the word of God; as we call by the name of Church, both the place and the company of the faithful. But there is this difference between the synagogue which is called *congregation*, and the Church which is interpreted *convocation*, that flocks and cattle, and any thing else can be gathered together in one, but only rational beings can be called together. Accordingly the Apostolical doctors thought right to call a people which was distinguished by the superior dignity of a new grace rather by the name of Church, than Synagogue. But rightly also was the fact of His being magnified by those present proved, by actual evidence of word and deed, as it follows, *And he was magnified by all.*

Origen. But you must not think that they only were happy, and that you are deprived of Christ's teaching. For now also throughout the world He teaches through His instruments, and is now more glorified by all men, than at that time when those only in one province were gathered together.

Cyril of Alexandria. He communicates the knowledge of Himself to those among whom He was brought up according to the flesh. As it follows, *And he came to Nazareth.*

Theophylact. That He might teach us to benefit and instruct first our brethren, then to extend our kindness to the rest of our friends.

Bede. They flocked together on the Sabbath day in the synagogues, that, resting from all worldly occupations, they might set themselves down with a quiet mind to meditate on the precepts of the Law. Hence it follows, *And he entered as was his custom on the Sabbath day into the synagogue.*

Ambrose. The Lord in every thing so humbled Himself to obedience, that He did not despise even the office of a reader, as it follows, *And he rose up to read, and there was delivered unto him the book*, &c. He received the book indeed, that He might shew Himself to be the same who spoke in the Prophets, and that He might stop the blasphemies of the wicked, who say that there is one God of the Old Testament, another of the New; or who say that Christ had His beginning from a virgin. For how did He begin from a virgin, who spoke before that virgin was?

Origen. He opens not the book by chance, and finds a chapter containing a prophecy of Himself, but by the providence of God. Hence it follows, *And when he had opened the book, he found the place, &c.* (Is. 61:1.)

Athanasius. (Orat. 2. cont. Arian.) He says this to explain to us the cause of the revelation made to the world, and of His taking upon Him the human nature. For as the Son, though He is the giver of the Spirit, does not refuse to confess as man that by the Spirit He casts out devils, so, inasmuch as He was made man, He does not refuse to say, *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*

Cyril of Alexandria. In like manner we confess Him to have been anointed, inasmuch as He took upon Him our flesh, as it follows, *Because he hath anointed me.* For the Divine nature is not anointed, but that which is cognate to us. So also when He says that He was sent, we must suppose Him speaking of His human nature. For it follows, *He hath sent me to preach the gospel to the poor.*

Ambrose. You see the Trinity coeternal and perfect. The Scripture speaks of Jesus as perfect God and perfect man. It speaks of the Father, and the Holy Spirit, who was shewn to be a cooperator, when in a bodily form as a dove He descended upon Christ.

Origen. By the poor He means the Gentile nations, for they were poor, possessing nothing at all, having neither God, nor Law, nor Prophets, nor justice, and the other virtues.

Ambrose. Or, He is anointed all over with spiritual oil, and heavenly virtue, that He might enrich the poverty of man's condition with the everlasting treasure of His resurrection.

Bede. He is sent also to preach the Gospel to the poor, saying, *Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For perhaps to the poor in spirit He declares in these words, that among all the gifts which are obtained through Christ, upon them was bestowed a free gift. It follows, *To heal the broken hearted.* He calls those *broken hearted*, who are weak, of an infirm mind, and unable to resist the assaults of the passions, and to them He promises a healing remedy.

Basil. (non occ.) Or, He came to heal the broken hearted, i. e. to afford a remedy to those that have their heart broken by Satan through sin, because beyond all other things sin lays prostrate the human heart.

Bede. Or, because it is written, *A broken and a contrite heart God will not despise.* (Ps. 51:17.) He says therefore, that He is sent to heal the broken hearted, as it is written, *Who heals the broken hearted.* (Ps. 147:3.)

It follows, *And to preach deliverance to the captives.*

Chrysostom. (in Ps. 125.) The word captivity has many meanings. There is a good captivity, which St. Paul speaks of when he says, *Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* (2 Cor. 10:5.) There is a bad captivity also, of which it is said, *Leading captive silly women laden with sins.* (2 Tim. 3:6.) There is a captivity present to the senses, that is by our bodily enemies. But the worst captivity is that of the mind, of which he here speaks. For sin exercises the worst of all tyrannies, commanding to do evil, and destroying them that obey it. From this prison of the soul Christ lets us free.

Theophylact. But these things may be understood also of the dead, who being taken captive have been loosed from the dominion of hell by the resurrection of Christ. It follows, *And recovering of sight to the blind.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For the darkness which the Devil has spread over the human heart, Christ the Sun of Righteousness has removed, making men, as the Apostle says, children not of night and darkness, but of light and the day. (1 Thess. 5:5.) For they who one time wandered have discovered the path of the righteous. It follows, *To set at liberty them that are bruised.*

Origen. For what had been so shattered and dashed about as man, who was set at liberty by Jesus and healed?

Bede. Or, *to set at liberty them that are bruised*; i. e. to relieve those who had been heavy laden with the intolerable burden of the Law.

Origen. But all these things were mentioned first, in order that after the recovery of sight from blindness, after deliverance from captivity, after being healed of divers wounds, we might come to the acceptable year of the Lord. As it follows, *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* Some say that, according to the simple meaning of the word, the Saviour preached the Gospel throughout Judæa in one year, and that this is what is meant by preaching the acceptable year of the Lord. Or, the acceptable year of the Lord is the whole time of the Church, during which while present in the body, it is absent from the Lord.

Bede. For not only was that year acceptable in which our Lord preached, but that also in which the Apostle preaches, saying, *Behold, now is the accepted time.* (2 Cor. 6:2.) After the acceptable year of the Lord, he adds, *And the day of retribution*; [a] that is, the final retribution, when the Lord shall give to every one according to his work.

Ambrose. Or, by the acceptable year of the Lord, he means this day extended through endless ages, which knows of no return to a world of labour, and grants to men everlasting reward and rest. It follows, *And he closed the book, and he gave it again.*

Bede. He read the book to those who were present to hear Him, but having read it, He returned it to the minister; for while He was in the world He spoke openly, teaching in the synagogues and in the temple; but about to return to heaven, He committed the office of preaching the Gospel to those who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word. He read standing, because while explaining those Scriptures which were written of Him, He condescended to work in the flesh; but having returned the book, He sits down, because He restored Himself to the throne of heavenly rest. For standing is the part of the workman, but sitting of one who is resting or judging. So also let the preacher of the word rise up and read and work and preach, and sit down, i. e. wait for the reward of rest. But He opens the book and reads, because sending the Spirit, He taught His Church all truth; having shut the book, He returned it to the minister, because all things were not to be said unto all, but He committed the word to the teacher to be dispensed according to the capacity of the hearers. It follows, *And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fastened on him.*

Origen. And now also if we will, our eyes can look upon the Saviour. For when you direct your whole heart to wisdom, truth, and the contemplation of the only-begotten Son of God, your eyes behold Jesus.

Cyril of Alexandria. But then He turned the eyes of all men upon Him, wondering how He knew the writing which He had never learnt. But since it was the custom of the Jews to say that the prophecies spoken of Christ are completed either in certain of their chiefs, i. e. their kings, or in some of their holy prophets, the Lord made this announcement; as it follows, *But he began to say unto them that this Scripture is fulfilled.*

Bede. Because, in fact, as that Scripture had foretold, the Lord was both doing great things, and preaching greater.

4:22–27

22. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?

23. And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country.

24. And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.

25. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land;

26. But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 48. in Matt.) When our Lord came to Nazareth, He refrains from miracles, lest He should provoke the people to greater malice. But He sets before them His teaching no less wonderful than His miracles. For there was a certain ineffable grace in our Saviour's words which softened the hearts of the hearers. Hence it is said, *And they all bare him witness.*

Bede. They bare Him witness that it was truly He, as He had said, of whom the prophet had spoken.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But foolish men though wondering at the power of His words little esteemed Him because of His reputed father. Hence it follows, *And they said, Is not this the son of Joseph?*

Cyril of Alexandria. But what prevents Him from filling men with awe, though He were the Son as was supposed of Joseph? Do you not see the divine miracles, Satan already prostrate, men released from their sickness?

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) For though after a long time and when He had begun to shew forth His miracles, He came to them; they did not receive Him, but again were inflamed with envy. Hence it follows, *And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself.*

Cyril of Alexandria. It was a common proverb among the Hebrews, invented as a reproach, for men used to cry out against infirm physicians, *Physician, heal thyself.*

Gloss. (ordin.) It was as if they said, We have heard that you performed many cures in Capernaum; cure also thyself, i. e. Do likewise in your own city, where you were nourished and brought up.

Augustine. (de Cons. Ev. lib. ii. 42.) But since St. Luke mentions that great things had been already done by Him, which he knows he had not yet related, what is more evident than that he knowingly anticipated the relation of them. For he had not proceeded so far beyond our Lord's baptism as that he should be supposed to have forgotten that he had not yet related any of those things which were done in Capernaum.

Ambrose. But the Saviour purposely excuses Himself for not working miracles in His own country, that no one might suppose that love of country is a thing to be lightly esteemed by us. For it follows, *But he says, Verily I say unto you, that no prophet is accepted in his own country.*

Cyril of Alexandria. As if He says, You wish me to work many miracles among you, in whose country I have been brought up, but I am aware of a very common failing in the minds of many. To a certain extent it always happens, that even the very best things are despised when they fall to a man's lot, not scantily, but ever at his will. So it happens also with respect to men. For a friend who is ever at hand, does not meet with the respect due to him.

Bede. Now that Christ is called a Prophet in the Scriptures, Moses bears witness, saying, *God shall raise up a Prophet unto you from among your brethren.* (Deut. 18:15.)

Ambrose. But this is given for an example, that in vain can you expect the aid of Divine mercy, if you grudge to others the fruits of their virtue. The Lord despises the envious, and withdraws the miracles of His power from them that are jealous of His divine blessings in others. For our Lord's Incarnation is an evidence of His divinity, and His invisible things are proved to us by those which are visible. See then what evils envy produces. For envy a country is deemed unworthy of the works of its citizen, which was worthy of the conception of the Son of God.

Origen. As far as Luke's narrative is concerned, our Lord is not yet said to have worked any miracle in Capernaum. For before He came to Capernaum, He is said to have lived at Nazareth. I cannot but think therefore that in these words, "whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum," there lies a mystery concealed, and that Nazareth is a type of the Jews, Capernaum of the Gentiles. For the time will come when the people of Israel shall say, "The things which thou hast shewn to the whole world, shew also to us." Preach thy word to the people of Israel, that then at least, when the fulness of the Gentiles has entered, all Israel may be saved. Our Saviour seems to me to have well answered, *No prophet is accepted in his own country*, but rather according to the type than the letter; though neither was Jeremiah accepted in Anathoth his country, nor the rest of the Prophets. But it seems rather to be meant that we should say, that the people of the circumcision were the countrymen of all the Prophets. And the Gentiles indeed accepted the prophecy of Jesus Christ, esteeming Moses and the Prophets who preached of Christ, far higher than they who would not from these receive Jesus.

Ambrose. By a very apt comparison the arrogance of envious citizens is put to shame, and our Lord's conduct shewn to agree with the ancient Scriptures. For it follows, *But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias*: not that the days were his, but that he performed his works in them.

Chrysostom. He himself, an earthly angel, a heavenly man, who had neither house, nor food, nor clothing like others, carries the keys of the heavens on his tongue. And this is what follows, *When the heaven was shut.* But as soon as he had closed the heavens and made the earth barren, hunger reigned and bodies wasted away, as it follows, *when there was a famine through the land.*

Basil. (Hom. 2. de jejun. Hom. de fame.) For when he beheld the great disgrace that arose from universal plenty, he brought a famine that the people might fast, by which he checked their sin which was exceeding great. But crows were made the ministers of food to the righteous, which are wont to steal the food of others.

Chrysostom. (Hom. in Pet. et Eli.) But when the stream was dried up by which the cup of the righteous man was filled, God said, Go to Sarepta, a city of Sidon; there I will command a widow woman to feed you. As it follows, *But to none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.* And this was brought to pass by a particular appointment of God. For God made him go a long journey, as far as Sidon, in order that having seen the famine of the country he should ask for rain from the Lord. But there were many rich men at that time, but none of them did any thing like the widow. For in the respect shewn by the woman toward the prophet, consisted her riches not of lands, but of good will.

Ambrose. But he says in a mystery, "In the days of Elias," because Elias brought the day to them who saw in his works the light of spiritual grace, and so the heaven was opened to them that beheld the divine mystery, but was shut when there was famine, because there was no fruitfulness in acknowledging God. But in that widow to whom Elias was sent was prefigured a type of the Church.

Origen. For when a famine came upon the people of Israel, i. e. of hearing the word of God, a prophet came to a widow, of whom it is said, *For the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband*; (Isa. 54:1, Gal. 4:27.) and when he had come, he multiplies her bread and her nourishment.

Bede. Sidonia signifies a vain pursuit, Sarepta fire, or scarcity of bread. By all which things the Gentiles are signified, who, given up to vain pursuits, (following gain and worldly business,) were suffering from the flames of fleshly lusts, and the want of spiritual bread, until Elias, (i. e. the word of prophecy,) now that the interpretation of the Scriptures had ceased because of the faithlessness of the Jews, came to the Church, that being received into the hearts of believers he might feed and refresh them.

Basil. (Hom. in div.) Every widowed soul, bereft of virtue and divine knowledge, as soon as she receives the divine word, knowing her own failings, learns to nourish it with the bread of virtue, and to water the teaching of virtue from the fountain of life.

Origen. He cites also another similar example, adding, *And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of Eliseus the Prophet, and none of them were cleansed but Naaman the Syrian*, who indeed was not of Israel.

Ambrose. Now in a mystery the people pollute the Church, that another people might succeed, gathered together from foreigners, leprous indeed at first before it is baptized in the mystical stream, but which after the sacrament of baptism, washed from the stains of body and soul, begins to be a virgin without spot or wrinkle.

Bede. For Naaman, which means beautiful, represents the Gentile people, who is ordered to be washed seven times, because that baptism saves which the seven-fold Spirit renews. His flesh after washing began to appear as a child's, because grace like a mother begets all to one childhood, or because he is conformed to Christ, of whom it is said, *Unto us a Child is born.* (Isa. 9:6.)

4:28–30

28. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath,

29. And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong.

30. But he passing through the midst of them went his way.

Cyril of Alexandria. He convicted them of their evil intentions, and therefore they are enraged, and hence what follows, *And all they in the synagogue when they heard these things were filled with wrath.* Because He had said, This day is this prophecy fulfilled, they thought that He compared Himself to the prophets, and are therefore enraged, and expel Him out of their city, as it follows, *And they rose up, and cast him out.*

Ambrose. It can not be wondered at that they lost their salvation who cast the Saviour out of their city. But the Lord who taught His Apostles by the example of Himself to be all things to all men, neither repels the willing, nor chooses the unwilling; neither struggles against those who cast Him out, nor refuses to hear those who supplicate Him. But that conduct was the result of no slight enmity, which, forgetful of the feelings of fellow citizens, converts the causes of love into the bitterest hatred. For when the Lord Himself was extending His blessings among the people, they began to inflict injuries upon Him, as it follows, *And they led him unto the brow of the hill, that they might cast him down.*

Bede. Worse are the Jewish disciples than their master the Devil. For he says, *Cast thyself down*; they actually attempt to cast Him down. But Jesus having suddenly changed His mind, or seized with astonishment, went away, since He still reserves for them a place of repentance. Hence it follows, *He passing through the midst of them went his way.*

Chrysostom. (48. in Joann.) Herein He shews both His human nature and His divine. To stand in the midst of those who were plotting against Him, and not be seized, betokened the loftiness of His divinity; but His departure declared the mystery of the dispensation, i. e. His incarnation.

Ambrose. At the same time we must understand that this bodily endurance was not necessary, but voluntary. When He wills, He is taken, when He wills, He escapes. For how could He be held by a few who was not held by a whole people? But He would not have the impiety to be the deed of the many, in order that by a few indeed He might be afflicted, but might die for the whole world. Moreover, He had still rather heal the Jews than destroy them, that by the fruitless issue of their rage they might be dissuaded from wishing what they could not accomplish.

Bede. The hour of His Passion had not yet come, which was to be on the preparation of the Passover, nor had He yet come to the place of His Passion, which not at Nazareth, but at Jerusalem, was prefigured by the blood of the victims; nor had He chosen this kind of death, of whom it was prophesied that He should be crucified by the world.

4:31–37

31. And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days.

32. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power.

33. And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34. Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God.

35. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36. And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out.

37. And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

Ambrose. Neither indignation at their treatment, nor displeasure at their wickedness, caused our Lord to abandon Judæa, but unmindful of His injuries, and remembering mercy, at one time by teaching, at another by healing, He softens the hearts of this unbelieving people, as it is said, *And he went down to Capernaum.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For although He knew that they were disobedient and hard of heart, He nevertheless visits them, as a good Physician tries to heal those who are suffering from a mortal disease. But He taught them boldly in the synagogues, as Esaias saith, *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth.* (Isa. 45:19.) On the sabbath day also He disputed with them, because they were at leisure. They wondered therefore at the mightiness of His teaching, His virtue, and His power, as it follows, *And they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power.* That is, not soothing, but urging and exciting them to seek salvation. Now the Jews supposed Christ to be one of the saints or prophets. But in order that they might esteem Him higher, He passes beyond the prophetic limits. For he said not, "Thus saith the Lord," but being the Master of the Law, He uttered things which were above the Law, changing the letter to the truth, and the figures to the spiritual meaning.

Bede. The word of the teacher is with power, when he performs that which he teaches. But he who by his actions belies what he preaches is despised.

Cyril of Alexandria. But He generally intermingles with His teaching the performance of mighty works. For those whose reason does not incline to knowledge, are roused by the manifestation of miracles. Hence it follows, *And there was in the synagogue a man which had a devil.*

Ambrose. The work of divine healing commenced on the sabbath, signifying thereby that he began anew where the old creation ceased, in order that He might declare at the very beginning that the Son of God was not under the Law, but above the Law. Rightly also He began on the sabbath, that He might shew Himself the Creator, who interweaves His works one within another, and follows up that which He had before begun; just as a builder determining to reconstruct a house, begins to pull down the old one, not from the foundation, but from the top, so as to apply his hand first to that part, where he had before left off. Holy men may through the word of God deliver from evil spirits, but to bid the dead rise again, is the work of Divine power alone.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the Jews spoke falsely of the glory of Christ, saying, *He casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.* To remove this charge, when the devils came beneath His invincible power, and endured not the Divine Presence, they sent forth a savage cry, as it follows: *And he cried with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, &c.*

Bede. As if he said, Abstain a while from troubling me, thou who hast no fellowship with our designs.

Ambrose. It ought not to shock any one that the devil is mentioned in this book as the first to have spoken the name of Jesus of Nazareth. For Christ received not from him that name which an Angel brought down from heaven to the Virgin. The devil is of such effrontery, that he is the first to use a thing among men and bring it as something new to them, that he may strike people with terror at his power. Hence it follows: *For I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.*

Athanasius. (ad Epise. Æg. et Lib.) He spoke of Him not as a *Holy One of God*, as if He were like to the other saints, but as being in a remarkable manner *the Holy One*, with the addition of the article. For He is by nature holy by partaking of whom all others are called holy. Nor again did He speak this as if He knew it, but He pretended to know it.

Cyril of Alexandria. (et Tit. Bost.) For the devils thought by praises of this sort to make Him a lover of vainglory, that He might be induced to abstain from opposing or destroying them by way of grateful return.

Chrysostom. The devil wished also to disturb the order of things, and to deprive the Apostles of their dignity, and to incline the many to obey Him.

Athanasius. (ut sup.) Although he confessed the truth he controlled his tongue, lest with the truth he should also publish his own disgrace, which should teach us not to care for such, although they speak the truth, for we who know the divine Scripture, must not be taught by the devil, as it follows: *And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silent, &c.*

Bede. But by the permission of God, the man who was to be delivered from the devil is thrown into the midst, that the power of the Saviour being manifested might bring over many to the way of salvation. As it follows: *And when he had thrown him in the midst.* But this seems to be opposed to Mark, who says, *And the unclean spirit tearing him, and crying with a loud voice, went out of him*, unless we understand that Mark meant by tearing him the same as Luke by these words, *And when he had thrown him in the midst*, so that what follows, *and hurt him not*, might be understood to mean, that that twisting of limbs, and sore troubling, did not weaken him, as is often the case when devils depart from a man, leaving him with limbs cut and torn off. Well then do they wonder at such complete restoration of health. For it follows: *And fear came upon all.*

Theophylact. As if they said, What is this word by which he commands, Go out, and he went out?

Bede. Holy men were able by the word of God to cast out devils, but the Word Himself does mighty works by His own power.

Ambrose. In a mystery, the man in the synagogue with the unclean spirit is the Jewish people, which being fast bound in the wiles of the devil, defiled its vaunted cleanliness of body by the pollution of the heart. And truly it had an unclean spirit, because it had lost the Holy Spirit. For the devil entered whence Christ had gone out.

Theophylact. We must know also that many now have devils, namely, such as fulfil the desires of devils, as the furious have the dæmon of anger; and so of the rest. But the Lord came into the synagogue when the thoughts of the man were collected, and then says to the dæmon that dwelt there, *Hold thy peace, and immediately throwing him into the middle he departs out of him.* For it becomes not a man always to be angry, (that is, like the brutes,) nor always to be without anger, (for that is want of feeling,) but he must take the middle path, and have anger against what is evil; and so the man is thrown into the midst when the unclean spirit departs from him.

4:38–39

38. And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house. And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever: and they besought him for her.

39. And he stood over her, and rebuked the fever: and it left her: and immediately she arose and ministered unto them.

Ambrose. Luke having first introduced a man delivered from an evil spirit, goes on to relate the healing of a woman. For our Lord had come to heal each sex, and he ought first to be healed who was first created. Hence it is said, *And he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 27. in Matt.) For He honoured His disciples by dwelling among them, and so making them the more zealous.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now see how Christ abides in the house of a poor man, suffering poverty of His own will for our sakes, that we might learn to visit the poor, and despise not the destitute and needy. It follows: *And Simon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever: and they besought him for her.*

Bede. At one time at the request of others, at another of his own accord, our Saviour cures the sick, shewing that He is far aloof from the passions of sinners, and ever grants the prayer of the faithful, and what they in themselves little understand He either makes intelligible, or forgives their not understanding it. As, *Who understands his errors? Lord, cleanse me from my secret faults.* (Ps. 19:12.)

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Because Matthew is silent on the point of asking Him, he does not differ from Luke, or it matters not, for one Gospel had brevity in view, the other accurate research. It follows: *And he stood over her, &c.*

Origen. Here Luke speaks figuratively, as of a command given to a sensible being, saying, that the fever was commanded, and neglected not the work of Him who commanded it. Hence it follows: *And she arose, and ministered unto them.*

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) For since the disease was curable, He shewed His power by the manner of the cure, doing what art could never do. For after the allaying of the fever, the patient needs much time ere he be restored to his former health, but at this time all took place at once.

Ambrose. But if we weigh these things with deeper thoughts, we shall consider the health of the mind as well as the body; that the mind which was assailed by the wiles of the devil may be released first. Eve was not a hungered before the serpent beguiled her, and therefore against the author of evil himself ought the medicine of salvation first to operate. Perhaps also in that woman as in a type our flesh languished under the various fevers of crimes, nor should I say that the fever of love was less than that of bodily heat.

Bede. For if we say that a man released from the devil represents morally the mind cleansed from unclean thoughts, consequently a woman vexed by fever, but cured at our Lord's command, represents the flesh controlled by the rules of continence in the fury of its own lust.

Cyril of Alexandria. Let us therefore receive Jesus. For when He has visited us, we carry Him in our heart and mind; He will then extinguish the flames of our unlicensed pleasures, and will make us whole, so that we minister unto Him, that is, do things well-pleasing to Him.

4:40–41

40. Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41. And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.

Theophylact. We must observe the zeal of the multitude, who after the sun had set bring their sick unto Him, not deterred by the lateness of the day; as it is said, *Now when the sun was setting, they brought their sick.*

Origen. It was ordered about sun-set, that is, when the day was gone, that they should bring them out, either because during the day they were employed about other things, or because they thought that it was not lawful to heal on the sabbath. But He healed them, as it follows, *But he laid his hands upon every one of them.*

Cyril of Alexandria. But although as God He was able to drive away diseases by His word, He nevertheless touches them, shewing that His flesh was powerful to apply remedies, since it was the flesh of God; for as fire, when applied to a brazen vessel, imprints on it the effect of its own heat, so the omnipotent Word of God, when He united to Himself in real assumption a living virgin temple, endued with understanding, implanted in it a participation of His own power. May He also touch us, nay rather may we touch Him, that He may deliver us from the infirmities of our souls as well as the assaults of the evil spirit and pride! For it follows, *And devils also came out.*

Bede. The devils confess the Son of God, and as it is afterwards said, *they knew him to be Christ*; for when the devil saw Him distressed by fasting, he perceived Him to be truly man, but when he prevailed not in his trial he doubted whether or not He were the Son of God, but now by the power of Christ's miracles he either perceived or suspected Him to be the Son of God. He did not then persuade the Jews to crucify Him because he thought Him not to be Christ or the Son of God, but because he did not foresee that by this death he himself would be condemned. Of this mystery hidden from the world the Apostle says, that none of the princes of this world knew, for if they had known they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory. (1 Cor. 2:8.)

Chrysostom. But in what follows, *And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak*, mark the humility of Christ, who would not let the unclean spirits make Him manifest. For it was not fit that they should usurp the glory of the Apostolical office, nor did it become the mysteries of Christ to be made public by impure tongues.

Theophylact. Because, "praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner." Or, because He did not wish to inflame the envy of the Jews by being praised of all.

Bede. But the Apostles themselves are commanded to be silent concerning Him, lest by proclaiming His divine Majesty, the dispensation of His Passion should be delayed.

4:42–44

42. And when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought him, and came unto him, and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43. And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent.

44. And he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

Chrysostom. When he had bestowed sufficient favour upon the people by miracles, it was necessary for Him to depart. For miracles are always thought greater when the worker is gone, since they themselves are then the more heeded, and have in their turn a voice; as it is said, *But when it was day, he departed, and went.*

Greek Expositor. (Victor Antiochenus.) He went also into the desert, as Mark says, and prayed; not that he needed prayer, but as an example to us of good works.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 25. in Matt.) The Pharisees indeed, seeing how that the miracles themselves published His fame, were offended at His power. But the people hearing His words, assented and followed; as it is said, *And the multitudes sought him*, not indeed any of the chief priests, or scribes, but all those who had not been blackened with the dark stain of malice, and preserved their consciences unhurt.

Greek Expositor. (ut sup.) Now when Mark says that the Apostles came to him, saying, *All seek thee*, but Luke, that the people came, there is no difference between them, for the people came to Him following in the footsteps of the Apostles. But the Lord rejoiced in being held back, yet bid them let Him go, that others also might partake of His teaching, as the time of His presence would not last long; as it follows, *And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also, &c.* Mark says, *Unto this I came*, shewing the loftiness of His divine nature, and His voluntary emptying Himself of it. But Luke says, *Unto this am I sent*, shewing His incarnation, and calling also the decree of the Father, *a sending Him forth*; and one simply says, *To preach*, the other added, *the kingdom of God*, which is Christ Himself.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 48. in Matt.) Observe also, that He might, by abiding in the same place, have drawn all men over to Himself. He did not however do so, giving us an example to go about and seek those who are perishing, as the shepherd his lost sheep, and as the physician the sick. For by recovering one soul, we may be able to blot out a thousand sins. Hence also it follows, *And he was preaching in the synagogues of Galilee*. He frequently indeed went to the synagogues, to shew them that He was no deceiver. For if He were constantly to dwell in the desolate places, they would spread abroad that He was concealing Himself.

Bede. But if the sun-setting mystically expresses the death of our Lord, the returning day denotes His resurrection, (the light of which being made manifest, He is sought for by the multitudes of believers, and being found in the desert of the Gentiles He is held back by them, lest He should depart;) especially as this took place on the first day of the week, on which day the Resurrection was celebrated.

CHAP. 5

5:1–3

1. And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2. And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3. And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

Ambrose. When the Lord had performed many and various kinds of cures, the multitude began to heed neither time nor place in their desire to be healed. The evening came, they followed; a lake is before them, they still press on; as it is said, *And it came to pass, as the people pressed upon him.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 25. in Matt.) For they clung to Him with love and admiration, and longed to keep Him with them. For who would depart while He performed such miracles? who would not be content to see only His face, and the mouth that uttered such things? Nor as performing miracles only was He an object of admiration, but His whole appearance was overflowing with grace. Therefore when He speaks, they listen to Him in silence, interrupting not the chain of His discourse; for it is said, *that they might hear the word of God, &c.* It follows, *And he stood near the lake of Gennesaret.*

Bede. The lake of Gennesaret is said to be the same as the sea of Galilee or the sea of Tiberias; but it is called the sea of Galilee from the adjacent province, the sea of Tiberias from a neighbouring city. Gennesaret however, is the name given it from the nature of the lake itself, (which is thought from its crossing waves to raise a breeze upon itself,) being the Greek expression for "making a breeze to itself." (quasi a γιννάω et ἀὴρ.) For the water is not steady like that of a lake, but constantly agitated by the breezes blowing over it. It is sweet to the taste, and wholesome to drink. In the Hebrew tongue, any extent of water, whether it be sweet or salt, is called a sea.

Theophylact. But the Lord seeks to avoid glory the more it followed Him, and therefore separating Himself from the multitude, He entered into a ship, as it is said, *And he saw two ships standing near the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.*

Chrysostom. This was a sign of leisure, but according to Matthew He finds them mending their nets. For so great was their poverty, that they patched up their old nets, not being able to buy new ones. But our Lord was very desirous to collect the multitudes, that none might remain behind, but they might all behold Him face to face; He therefore enters into a ship, as it is said, *And he entered into a ship, which was Simon's, and prayed him.*

Theophylact. Behold the gentleness of Christ; He asks Peter; and the willingness of Peter, who was obedient in all things.

Chrysostom. After having performed many miracles, He again commences His teaching, and being on the sea, He fishes for those who were on the shore. Hence it follows, *And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship.*

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 37.) Condescending to all, in order that He might draw forth a fish from the deep, i. e. man swimming in the everchanging scenes and bitter storms of this life.

Bede. Now mystically, the two ships represent circumcision and uncircumcision. The Lord sees these, because in each people He knows who are His, and by seeing, i. e. by a merciful visitation, He brings them nearer the tranquillity of the life to come. The fishermen are the doctors of the Church, because by the net of faith they catch us, and bring us as it were ashore to the land of the living. But these nets are at one time spread out for catching fish, at another washed and folded up. For every time is not fitted for teaching, but at one time the teacher must speak with the tongue, and at another time we must discipline ourselves. The ship of Simon is the primitive Church, of which St. Paul says, *He that wrought effectually in Peter to the Apostleship of circumcision.* (Gal. 2:8.) The ship is well called one, for in the multitude of believers there was one heart and one soul. (Acts 4:32.)

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. 1. 2. c. 2.) From which ship He taught the multitude, for by the authority of the Church He teaches the Gentiles. But the Lord entering the ship, and asking Peter to put off a little from the land, signifies that we must be moderate in our words to the multitude, that they may be neither taught earthly things, nor from earthly things rush into the depths of the sacraments. Or, the Gospel must first be preached to the neighbouring countries of the Gentiles, that (as He afterwards says, *Launch out into the deep,*) He might command it to be preached afterwards to the more distant nations.

5:4–7

4. Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5. And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

6. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

Cyril of Alexandria. Having sufficiently taught the people, He returns again to His mighty works, and by the employment of fishing fishes for His disciples. Hence it follows, *When he had left off speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 6. in Matt.) For in His condescension to men, He called the wise men by a star, the fishermen by their art of fishing.

Theophylact. Peter did not refuse to comply, as it follows, *And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all night and have taken nothing.* He did not go on to say, "I will not hearken to thee, nor expose myself to additional labour," but rather adds, *Nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.* But our Lord, since he had taught the people out of the ship, left not the master of the ship without reward, but conferred on him a double kindness, giving him first a multitude of fishes, and next making him His disciple: as it follows, *And when they had done this, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes.* They took so many fishes that they could not pull them out, but sought the assistance of their companions; as it follows, *But their net brake, and they beckoned to their partners who were in the other ship to come, &c.* Peter summons them by a sign, being unable to speak from astonishment at the draught of fishes. We next hear of their assistance, *And they came and filled both the ships.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. 4. c. 6.) John seems indeed to speak of a similar miracle, but this is very different from the one he mentions. That took place after our Lord's resurrection at the lake of Tiberias, and not only the time, but the miracle itself is very different. For in the latter the nets being let down on the right side took one hundred and fifty-three fishes, and these of large size, which it was necessary for the Evangelist to mention, because though so large the nets were not broken, and this would seem to have reference to the event which Luke relates, when from the multitude of the fishes the nets were broken.

Ambrose. Now in a mystery, the ship of Peter, according to Matthew, is beaten about by the waves, (Matt. 8:24.) according to Luke, is filled with fishes, in order that you might understand the Church at first wavering, at last abounding. The ship is not shaken which holds Peter; that is which holds Judas. In each was Peter; but he who trusts in his own merits is disquieted by another's. Let us beware then of a traitor, lest through one we should many of us be tossed about. Trouble is found there where faith is weak, safety here where love is perfect. Lastly, though to others it is commanded, *Let down your nets*, to Peter alone it is said, *Launch out into the deep*, i. e. into deep researches. What is so deep, as the knowledge of the Son of God! But what are the nets of the Apostles which are ordered to be let down, but the interweaving of words and certain folds, as it were, of speech, and intricacies of argument, which never let those escape whom they have once caught. And rightly are nets the Apostolical instruments for fishing, which kill not the fish that are caught, but keep them safe, and bring up those that are tossing about in the waves from the depths below to the regions above. But he says, *Master, we have toiled the whole night and have caught nothing*; for this is not the work of human eloquence but the gift of divine calling. But they who had before caught nothing, at the word of the Lord inclosed a great multitude of fishes.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now this was a figure of the future. For they will not labour in vain who let down the net of evangelical doctrine, but will gather together the shoals of the Gentiles.

Augustine. (ut sup.) Now the circumstance of the nets breaking, and the ships being filled with the multitude of fishes so that they began to sink, signifies that there will be in the Church so great a multitude of carnal men, that unity will be broken up, and it will be split into heresies and schisms.

Bede. The net is broken, but the fish escape not, for the Lord preserves His own amid the violence of persecutors.

Ambrose. But the other ship is Judæa, out of which James and John are chosen. These then came from the synagogue to the ship of Peter in the Church, that they might fill both ships. For at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, whether Jew or Greek.

Bede. Or the other ship is the Church of the Gentiles, which itself also (one ship being not sufficient) is filled with chosen fishes. For the Lord knows who are His, and with Him the number of His elect is sure. And when He finds not in Judæa so many believers as He knows are destined to eternal life, He seeks as it were another ship to receive His fishes, and fills the hearts of the Gentiles also with the grace of faith. And well when the net brake did they call to their assistance the ship of their companions, since the traitor Judas, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, and many of the disciples, went back. And then Barnabas and Paul were separated for the Apostleship of the Gentiles.

Ambrose. We may understand also by the other ship another Church, since from one Church several are derived.

Cyril of Alexandria. But Peter beckons to his companions to help them. For many follow the labours of the Apostles, and first those who brought out the writings of the Gospels, next to whom are the other heads and shepherds of the Gospel, and those skilled in the teaching of the truth.

Bede. But the filling of these ships goes on until the end of the world. But the fact that the ships, when filled, begin to sink, i. e. become weighed low down in the water; (for they are not sunk, but are in great danger,) the Apostle explains when he says, *In the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be lovers of their own selves, &c.* (2 Tim. 3:1, 2.) For the sinking of the ships is when men, by vicious habits, fall back into that world from which they have been elected by faith.

5:8–11

8. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10. And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

Bede. Peter was astonished at the divine gift, and the more he feared, the less did he now presume; as it is said, *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For calling back to his consciousness the crimes he had committed, he is alarmed and trembles, and as being unclean, he believes it impossible he can receive Him who is clean, for he had learnt from the law to distinguish between what is defiled and holy.

Gregory of Nyssa. When Christ commanded to let down the nets, the multitude of the fishes taken was just as great as the Lord of the sea and land willed.

For the voice of the Word is the voice of power, at whose bidding at the beginning of the world light and the other creatures came forth. At these things Peter wonders, *for he was astonished, and all that were with him, &c.*

Augustine. (de con. Ev. lib. ii. 17.) He does not mention Andrew by name, who however is thought to have been in that ship, according to the accounts of Matthew and Mark. It follows, *And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not.*

Ambrose. Say thou also, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord*, that God may answer, *Fear not*. Confess thy sin, and the Lord will pardon thee. See how good the Lord is, who gives so much to men, that they have the power of making alive. As it follows, *From henceforth thou shalt catch men.*

Bede. This especially belongs to Peter himself, for the Lord explains to him what this taking of fish means; that in fact as now he takes fishes by the net, so hereafter he will catch men by words. And the whole order of this event shews what is daily going on in the Church, of which Peter is the type.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 14. in Matt.) But mark their faith and obedience. For though they were eagerly engaged in the employment of fishing, yet when they heard the command of Jesus, they delayed not, but forsook all and followed Him. Such is the obedience which Christ demands of us; we must not forego it, even though some great necessity urges us. Hence it follows, *And having brought their ships to land.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Matthew and Mark here briefly state the matter, and how it was done. Luke explains it more at large. There seems however to be this difference, that he makes our Lord to have said to Peter only, *From henceforth thou shalt catch men*, whereas they related it as having been spoken to both the others. But surely it might have been said at first to Peter, when he marvelled at the immense draught of fishes, as Luke suggests, and afterwards to both, as the other two have related it. Or we must understand the event to have taken place as Luke relates, and that the others were not then called by the Lord, but only it was foretold to Peter that he should catch men, not that he should no more be employed in fishing; and hence there is room for supposing that they returned to their fishing, so that afterwards that might happen which Matthew and Mark speak, of. For then the ships were not brought to land, as if with the intention of returning, but they followed Him as calling or commanding them to come. (Matt. 4:20, Mark 1:18.) But if according to John, Peter and Andrew followed Him close by Jordan, how do the other Evangelists say that He found them fishing in Galilee, and called them to the discipleship? Except we understand that they did not see the Lord near Jordan so as to join Him inseparably, but knew only who He was, and marvelling at Him returned to their own.

Ambrose. But mystically, those whom Peter takes by his word, he claims not as his own booty or his own gift. *Depart*, he says, *from me, O Lord.* Fear not then also to ascribe what is thy own to the Lord, for what was His He has given to us.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. c. 2.) Or, Peter speaks in the character of the Church full of carnal men, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.* As if the Church, crowded with carnal men, and almost sunk by their vices, throws off from it, as it were, the rule in spiritual things, wherein the character of Christ chiefly shines forth. For not with the tongue do men tell the good servants of God that they should depart from them, but with the utterance of their deeds and actions they persuade them to go away, that they may not be governed by the good. And yet all the more anxiously do they hasten to pay honours to them, just as Peter testified his respect by falling at the feet of our Lord, but his conduct in saying, *Depart from me.*

Bede. But the Lord allays the fears of carnal men, that no one trembling at the consciousness of his guilt, or astonished at the innocence of others, might be afraid to undertake the journey of holiness.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But the Lord did not depart from them, shewing thereby that good and spiritual men, when they are troubled by the wickedness of the many, ought not to wish to abandon their ecclesiastical duties, that they might live as it were a more secure and tranquil life. But the bringing their ships to land, and forsaking all to follow Jesus, may represent the end of time, when those who have clung to Christ shall altogether depart from the storms of this world.

5:12–16

12. And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy: who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

13. And he put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14. And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the Priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15. But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

16. And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

Ambrose. The fourth miracle after Jesus came to Capernaum was the healing of a leprous man. But since He illumined the fourth day with the sun, and made it more glorious than the rest, we ought to think this work more glorious than those that went before; of which it is said, *And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy.* Rightly no definite place is mentioned where the leprous man was healed, to signify that not one people of any particular city, but all nations were healed.

Athanasius. (Ep. ad Adelph. 3.) Now the leper worshipped the Lord God in His bodily form, and thought not the Word of God to be a creature because of His flesh, nor because He was the Word did he think lightly of the flesh which He put on; nay rather in a created temple he adored the Creator of all things, falling down on his face, as it follows, *And when he saw Jesus he fell on his face, and besought him.*

Ambrose. In falling upon his face he marked his humility and modesty, for every one should blush at the stains of his life, but his reverence kept not back his confession, he shews his wound, and asks for a remedy, saying, *If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* Of the will of the Lord he doubted, not from distrust of His mercy, but checked by the consciousness of his own unworthiness. But the confession is one full of devotion and faith, placing all power in the will of the Lord.

Cyril of Alexandria. For he knew that leprosy yields not to the skill of physicians, but he saw the devils cast out by the Divine authority, and multitudes cured of divers diseases, all which he conceived was the work of the Divine arm.

Titus Bostrensis. Let us learn from the words of the leper not to go about seeking the cure of our bodily infirmities, but to commit the whole to the will of God, Who knows what is best for us, and disposes all things as He will.

Ambrose. He heals in the same manner in which He had been entreated to heal, as it follows, *And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, &c.* The law forbids to touch the leprous man, but He who is the Lord of the law submits not to the law, but makes the law; He did not touch because without touching He was unable to make him clean, but to shew that he was neither subject to the law, nor feared the contagion as man; for He could not be contaminated Who delivered others from the pollution. On the other hand, He touched also, that the leprosy might be expelled by the touch of the Lord, which was wont to contaminate him that touched.

Theophylact. For His sacred flesh has a healing, and life-giving power, as being indeed the flesh of the Word of God.

Ambrose. In the words which follow, *I will, be thou clean*, you have the will, you have also the result of His mercy.

Cyril of Alexandria. (Thes. 12. c. 14.) From majesty alone proceeds the royal command, how then is the Only-begotten counted among the servants, who by His mere will can do all things? We read of God the Father, that He hath done all things whatsoever He pleased. (Ps. 115:3; 135:6.) But He who exercises the power of His Father, how can He differ from Him in nature? Besides, whatsoever things are of the same power, are wont to be of the same substance. Again; let us then admire in these things Christ working both divinely and bodily. For it is of God so to will that all things are done accordingly, but of man to stretch forth the hand. From two natures therefore is perfected one Christ, for that *the Word was made flesh.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. 1. in Resur. Christ.) And because the Deity is united with each portion of man, i. e. both soul and body, in each are evident the signs of a heavenly nature. For the body declared the Deity hidden in it, when by touching it afforded a remedy, but the soul, by the mighty power of its will, marked the Divine strength. For as the sense of touch is the property of the body, so the motion of the will of the soul. The soul wills, the body touches.

Ambrose. He says then, *I will*, for Photinus, He commands, for Arius, He touches, for Manichæus. But there is nothing intervening between God's work and His command, that we may see in the inclination of the healer the power of the work. Hence it follows, *And immediately the leprosy departed from him.* But lest leprosy should become rife among us, let each avoid boasting after the example of our Lord's humility. For it follows, *And he commanded him that he should tell it to no one*, that in truth he might teach us that our good deeds are not to be made public, but to be rather concealed, that we should abstain not only from gaining money, but even favour. Or perhaps the cause of His commanding silence was that He thought those to be preferred, who had rather believed of their own accord than from the hope of benefit.

Cyril of Alexandria. Though the leper was silent, the voice of the transaction itself was sufficient to publish it to all who acknowledged through him the power of the Curer.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 26. in Matt.) And since frequently men, when they are sick, remember God, but when they recover, wax dull, He bids him to always keep God before his eyes, giving glory to God. Hence it follows, *But go and shew thyself to the Priest*, in order that the leprous man being cleansed might submit himself to the inspection of the Priest, and so by his sanction be counted as healed.

Ambrose. And that the Priest also should know that not by the order of the law, but by the grace of God above the law, he was cured. And since a sacrifice is commanded by the regulation of Moses, the Lord shews that He does not abrogate the law, but fulfil it. As it follows, *And offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded.*

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. qu. 3.) He seems here to approve of the sacrifice which had been commanded through Moses, though the Church does not require it. It may therefore be understood to have been commanded, because not as yet had commenced that most holy sacrifice which is His body. For it was not fitting that typical sacrifices should be taken away before that which was typified should be confirmed by the witness of the Apostles' preaching, and the faith of believers.

Ambrose. Or because the law is spiritual He seems to have commanded a spiritual sacrifice. Hence he said, *As Moses commanded.* Lastly, he adds, *for a testimony unto them.* The heretics understand this erroneously, saying, that it was meant as a reproach to the law. But how would he order an offering for cleansing, according to Moses' commandments, if he meant this against the law?

Cyril of Alexandria. He says then, *for a testimony unto them*, because this deed makes manifest that Christ in His incomparable excellence is far above Moses. For when Moses could not rid his sister of the leprosy, he prayed the Lord to deliver her. But the Saviour, in His divine power, declared, *I will, be thou clean.* (Numb. 12:13.)

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Or, for a testimony against them, i. e. as a reproof of them, and a testimony that I respect the law. For now too that I have cured thee, I send thee for the examination of the priests, that thou shouldest bear me witness that I have not played false to the law. And although the Lord in giving out remedies advised telling them to no one, instructing us to avoid pride; yet His fame flew about every where, instilling the miracle into the ears of every one, as it follows, *But so much the more went there a fame abroad of him.*

Bede. Now the perfect healing of one brings many multitudes to the Lord, as it follows, *And great multitudes came together that they should be healed.* For the leprous man that he might shew both his outward and inward cure, even though forbid ceases not, as Mark says, to tell of the benefit he had received.

Gregory. (Mor. xxviii. c. 13.) Our Redeemer performs His miracles by day, and passes the night in prayer, as it follows, *And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed*, hinting, as it were, to perfect preachers, that as neither they should entirely desert the active life from love of contemplation, so neither should they despise the joys of contemplation from an excess of activity, but in silent thought imbibe that which they might afterwards give back in words to their neighbours.

Bede. Now that He retired to pray, you would not ascribe to that nature which says, *I will, be thou clean*, but to that which putting forth the hand touched the leprous man, not that according to Nestorius there is a double person of the Son, but of the same person, as there are two natures, so are there two operations.

Gregory Nazianzen. (26.) And His works He indeed performed among the people, but He prayed for the most part in the wilderness, sanctioning the liberty of resting a while from labour to hold converse with God with a pure heart. For He needed no change or retirement, since there was nothing which could be relaxed in Him, nor any place in which He might confine Himself, for He was God, but it was that we might clearly know that there is a

time for action, a time for each higher occupation.

Bede. How typically the leprous man represents the whole race of man, languishing with sins full of leprosy, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*; (Rom. 3:23.) that so by the hand put forth, i. e. the word of God partaking of human nature, they might be cleansed from the vanity of their old errors, and offer for cleansing their bodies as a living sacrifice.

Ambrose. But if the word is the healing of leprosy, the contempt of the word is the leprosy of the mind.

Theophylact. But mark, that after a man has been cleansed he is then worthy to offer this gift, namely, the body and blood of the Lord, which is united to the Divine nature.

5:17–26

17. And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judæa, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

19. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.

20. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21. And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?

22. But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23. Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24. But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

25. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

26. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Scribes and Pharisees who had become spectators of Christ's miracles, heard Him also teaching. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees sitting by, &c. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.* Not as though He borrowed the power of another, but as God and the Lord He healed by His own inherent power. Now men often become worthy of spiritual gifts, but generally depart from the rule which the giver of the gifts knew. It was not so with Christ, for the divine power went on abounding in giving remedies. But because it was necessary where so great a number of Scribes and Pharisees had come together, that something should be done to attest His power before those men who slighted Him, He performed the miracle on the man with the palsy, who since medical art seemed to fail, was carried by his kinsfolk to a higher and heavenly Physician. As it follows, *And behold men brought him.*

Chrysostom. But they are to be admired who brought in the paralytic, since on finding that they could not enter in at the door, they attempted a new and untried way. As it follows, *And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, they went upon the housetop, &c.* But unroofing the house they let down the couch, and place the paralytic in the midst, as it follows, *And they let him down through the things.* Some one may say, that the place was let down, from which they lowered the couch of the palsied man through the things.

Bede. The Lord about to cure the man of his palsy, first loosens the chains of his sins, that He may shew him, that on account of the bonds of his sins, he is punished with the loosening of his joints, and that unless the former are set free, he cannot be healed to the recovery of his limbs. Hence it follows, *And when he saw their faith, &c.*

Ambrose. Mighty is the Lord who pardons one man for the good deed of another, and while he approves of the one, forgives the other his sins. Why, O man, with thee does not thy fellowman prevail, when with God a servant has both the liberty to intercede in thy behalf, and the power of obtaining what he asks? If thou despairest of the pardon of heavy sins, bring the prayers of others, bring the Church to pray for thee, and at sight of this the Lord may pardon what otherwise He might deny to thee.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 29. in Matt.) But there was combined in this the faith also of the sufferer himself. For he would not have submitted to be let down, had he not believed.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 25.) But our Lord's saying, *Man, thy sins are forgiven*, conveys the meaning that the man had his sins forgiven him, because in that he was man, he could not say, "I have not sinned," but at the same time also, that He who forgave sins might be known to be God.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Now if we suffer bodily, we are enough concerned to get rid of the hurtful thing; but when there has harm happened to the soul, we delay, and so are neither cured of our bodily ailments. Let us then remove the fountain of evil, and the waters of sickness will cease to flow. But from fear of the multitude, the Pharisees durst not openly expose their designs, but only meditated them in their hearts Hence it follows, *And they began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies?*

Cyril of Alexandria. By this they hasten the sentence of death, for it was commanded in the law, that whoever blasphemed God should be punished with death. (Lev. 24:16.)

Ambrose. From the Pharisees themselves therefore the Son of God receives testimony. For it is both more powerful evidence when men confess unwillingly, and a more fatal error when they who deny are left to the consequence of their own assertions. Hence it follows, *Who can forgive sins, but*

God only? Great is the madness of an unbelieving people, who though they have confessed that it is of God alone to forgive sins, believe not God when He forgives sins.

Bede. For they say true, that no one can forgive sins but God, who yet forgives through those to whom He gives the power of forgiving. And therefore Christ is proved to be truly God, for He is able to forgive sins as God.

Ambrose. The Lord wishing to save sinners shews Himself to be God, by His knowledge of the secret thoughts; as it follows, *But that ye may know.*

Cyril of Alexandria. As if to say, O Pharisees, since ye say, *Who can forgive sins, but God alone?* I answer you, Who can search the secrets of the heart, but God alone, Who says by His prophet, *I am the Lord, that searcheth the hearts, and trieth the reins.* (Jer. 17:10.)

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) If then you disbelieve the first, (i. e. the forgiveness of sins,) behold, I add another, seeing that I lay open your inmost thoughts. Again, another that I make whole the body of the palsied man. Hence He adds, *Whether is it easier?* It is very plain that it is easier to restore the body to health. For as the soul is far nobler than the body, so is the forgiveness of sins more excellent than the healing of the body. But since you believe not the former, because it is hid; I will add that which is inferior, yet more open, in order that thereby that which is secret may be made manifest. And indeed in addressing the sick man, He said not, I forgive thee thy sins, expressing His own power, but, *Thy sins are forgiven thee.* But they compelled Him to declare more plainly His own power to them, when He said, *But that you may know.*

Theophylact. Observe that on earth He forgives sins. For while we are on earth we can blot out our sins. But after that we are taken away from the earth, we shall not be able to confess, for the gate is shut.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) He shews the pardon of sins by the healing of the body. Hence it follows, *He says unto the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, Rise.* But He manifests the healing of the body by the carrying of the bed, that so that which took place might be accounted no shadow. Hence it follows, *Take up thy bed.* As if He said, "I was willing through thy suffering to cure those who think that they are in health, while their souls are sick, but since they are unwilling, go and correct thy household."

Ambrose. Nor is there any delay, health is present; there is but one moment both of words, and healing. Hence it follows, *And immediately he rose.* From this fact it is evident, that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins; He said this both for Himself and us. For He as God made man, as the Lord of the law, forgives sins; we also have been chosen to receive from Him the same marvellous grace. For it was said to the disciples, *Whose sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them.* (John 20:23.) But how does He not Himself forgive sins, Who has given to others the power of doing so? But the kings and princes of the earth when they acquit homicides, release them from their present punishment, but cannot expiate their crimes.

Ambrose. They behold him rising up, still disbelieving, and marvel at his departing; as it follows, *And they were all amazed.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) The Jews creep on by degrees, glorifying God, yet thinking Him not God, for His flesh stood in their way. But still it was no slight thing to consider Him the chief of mortal men, and to have proceeded from God.

Ambrose. But they had rather fear the miracles of divine working, than believe them. As it follows, *And they were filled with fear.* But if they had believed they had not surely feared, but loved; for perfect love casteth out fear. But this was no careless or trifling cure of the paralytic, since our Lord is said to have prayed first, not for the petition's sake, but for an example.

Augustine. (l. ii. qu. 4.) With respect to the sick of the palsy, we may understand that the soul relaxed in its limbs, i. e. its operations, seeks Christ, i. e. the meaning of God's word; but is hindered by the crowds, that is to say, unless it discovers the secrets of the thoughts, i. e. the dark parts of the Scriptures, and thereby arrives at the knowledge of Christ.

Bede. And the house where Jesus was is well described as covered with tiles, since beneath the beggarly covering of letters is found the spiritual power of grace.

Ambrose. Now let every sick person have those that will pray for his salvation, by whom the loosened joints of our life and halting steps may be renewed by the remedy of the heavenly word. Let there be then certain monitors of the soul, to raise the mind of man, though grown dull through the weakness of the external body, to higher things, by the aid of which being able again easily to raise and humble itself, it may be placed before Jesus worthy to be presented in the Lord's sight. For the Lord beholdeth the humble.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) The men then by whom he is let down may signify the doctors of the Church. But that he is let down with the couch, signifies that Christ ought to be known by man, while yet abiding in his flesh.

Ambrose. But the Lord, pointing out the full hope of resurrection, pardons the sins of the soul, sets aside the weakness of the flesh. For this is the curing of the whole man. Although then it is a great thing to forgive the sins of men, it is yet much more divine to give resurrection to the bodies, since indeed God is the resurrection. But the bed which is ordered to be taken up is nothing else but the human body.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) That the infirm soul may no more rest in carnal joys, as in a bed, but rather itself restrain the carnal affections, and tend toward its own home, i. e. the resting-place of the secrets of its heart.

Ambrose. Or it may reseek its own home, i. e. return to Paradise, for that is its true home, which first received man, and was lost not fairly, but by treachery. Rightly then is the soul restored thither, since He has come Who will undo the treacherous knot, and reestablish righteousness.

5:27–32

27. And after these things he went forth, and saw a Publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.

28. And he left all, rose up, and followed him.

29. And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of Publicans and of others that sat down with them.

30. But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with Publicans and sinners?

31. And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

32. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. l. ii. c. 26.) After the healing of the sick of the palsy, St. Luke goes on to mention the conversion of a publican, saying, *And after these things, he went forth, and saw a publican of the name of Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom.* This is Matthew, also called Levi.

Bede. Now Luke and Mark, for the honour of the Evangelist, are silent as to his common name, but Matthew is the first to accuse himself, and gives the name of Matthew and publican, that no one might despair of salvation because of the enormity of his sins, when he himself was changed from a publican to an Apostle.

Cyril of Alexandria. For Levi had been a publican, a rapacious man, of unbridled desires after vain things, a lover of other men's goods, for this is the character of the publican, but snatched from the very worship of malice by Christ's call. Hence it follows, *And he said unto him, Follow me.* He bids him follow Him, not with bodily step, but with the soul's affections. Matthew therefore, being called by the Word, left his own, who was wont to seize the things of others, as it follows, *And having left all, he rose, and followed him.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 30. in Matt.) Here mark both the power of the caller, and the obedience of him that was called. For he neither resisted nor wavered, but forthwith obeyed; and like the fishermen, he did not even wish to go into his own house that he might tell it to his friends.

Basil. (Reg. fus. tract. 8.) He not only gave up the profits of the customs, but also despised the dangers which might occur to himself and his family from leaving the accounts of the receipts uncompleted.

Theophylact. And so from him that received toll from the passers by, Christ received toll, not money, but entire devotion to His company.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But the Lord honoured Levi, whom He had called, by immediately going to his feast. For this testified the greater confidence in him. Hence it follows, *And Levi made him a great feast in his own house.* Nor did He sit down to meat with him alone, but with many, as it follows, *And there was a great company of Publicans and others that sat down with them.* For the publicans came to Levi as to their colleague, and a man in the same line with themselves, and he too glorying in the presence of Christ, called them all together. For Christ displayed every sort of remedy, and not only by discoursing and displaying cures, or even by rebuking the envious, but also by eating with them, He corrected the faults of some, thereby giving us a lesson, that every time and occasion brings with it its own profit. But He shunned not the company of Publicans, for the sake of the advantage that might ensue, like a physician, who unless he touch the afflicted part cannot cure the disease.

Ambrose. For by His eating with sinners, He prevents not us also from going to a banquet with the Gentiles.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But nevertheless the Lord was blamed by the Pharisees, who were envious, and wished to separate Christ and His disciples, as it follows, *And the Pharisees murmured, saying, Why do you eat with Publicans, &c.*

Ambrose. This was the voice of the Devil. This was the first word the Serpent uttered to Eve, *Yea hath God said, Ye shall not eat.* (Gen. 3:1) So they diffuse the poison of their father.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 27.) Now St. Luke seems to have related this somewhat different from the other Evangelists. For he does not say that to our Lord alone it was objected that He eat and drank with publicans and sinners, but to the disciples also, that the charge might be understood both of Him and them. But the reason that Matthew and Mark related the objection as made concerning Christ to His disciples, was, that seeing the disciples ate with publicans and sinners, it was the rather objected to their Master as Him whom they followed and imitated; the meaning therefore is the same, yet so much the better conveyed, as while still keeping to the truth, it differs in certain words.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But our Lord refutes all their charges, shewing, that so far from its being a fault to mix with sinners, it is but a part of His merciful design, as it follows, *And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician*; in which He reminds them of their common infirmities, and shews them that they are of the number of the sick, but adds, He is the Physician. It follows, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* As if He should say, So far am I from hating sinners, that for their sakes only I came, not that they should remain sinners, but be converted and become righteous.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Hence He adds, *to repentance*, which serves well to explain the passage, that no one should suppose that sinners, because they are sinners, are loved by Christ, since that similitude of the sick plainly suggests what our Lord meant by calling sinners, as a Physician, the sick, in order that from iniquity as from sickness they should be saved.

Ambrose. But how does God love righteousness, and David has never seen the righteous man forsaken, if the righteous are excluded, the sinner called; unless you understand that He meant by the righteous those who *boast of the law*, (Ps. 11:7, Ps. 37:25.) and seek not the grace of the Gospel. Now no one is justified by the law, but redeemed by grace. He therefore calls not those who call themselves righteous, for the claimers to righteousness are not called to grace. For if grace is from repentance, surely he who despises repentance renounces grace.

Ambrose. But He calls those sinners, who considering their guilt, and feeling that they cannot be justified by the law, submit themselves by repentance to the grace of Christ.

Chrysostom. Now He speaks of the righteous ironically, as when He says, *Behold Adam is become as one of us.* (Gen. 3:22.) But that there was none righteous upon the earth St. Paul shews, saying, *All have sinned, and need the grace of God.* (Rom. 3:23.)

Gregory of Nyssa. Or, He means that the sound and righteous need no physician, i. e. the angels, but the corrupt and sinners, i. e. ourselves do; since we catch the disease of sin, which is not in heaven.

Bede. Now by the election of Matthew is signified the faith of the Gentiles, who formerly gasped after worldly pleasures, but now refresh the body of Christ with zealous devotion.

Theophylact. Or the publican is he who serves the prince of this world, and is debtor to the flesh, to which the glutton gives his food, the adulterer his pleasure, and another something else. But when the Lord saw him sitting at the receipt of custom, and not stirring himself to greater wickedness, He calls him that he might be snatched from the evil, and follow Jesus, and receive the Lord into the house of his soul.

Ambrose. But he who receives Christ into his inner chamber, is fed with the greatest delights of overflowing pleasures. The Lord therefore willingly enters, and reposes in his affection; but again the envy of the treacherous is kindled, and the form of their future punishment is prefigured; for while all the faithful are feasting in the kingdom of heaven, the faithless will be cast out hungry. Or, by this is denoted the envy of the Jews, who are afflicted at the salvation of the Gentiles.

Ambrose. At the same time also is shewn the difference between those who are zealous for the law and those who are for grace, that they who follow the law shall suffer eternal hunger of soul, while they who have received the word into the inmost soul, refreshed with abundance of heavenly meat and drink, can neither hunger nor thirst. And so they who fasted in soul murmured.

5:33–39

33. And they said unto him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

34. And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?

35. But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

36. And he spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old.

37. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.

Cyril of Alexandria. As soon as they have received the first answer from Christ, they proceed from one thing to another, with the intent to shew that the holy disciples, and Jesus Himself with them, cared very little for the law. Hence it follows, *Why do the disciples of John fast, but thine eat, &c.* (Lev. 15, prævaricationis.) As if they said, Ye eat with publicans and sinners, whereas the law forbids to have any fellowship with the unclean, but compassion comes in as an excuse for your transgression; why then do ye not fast, as they are wont to do who wish to live according to the law? But holy men indeed fast, that by the mortification of their body they may quell its passions. Christ needed not fasting for the perfecting of virtue, since as God He was free from every yoke of passion. Nor again did His companions need fasting, but being made partakers of His grace without fasting they were strengthened in all holy and godly living. For when Christ fasted for forty days, it was not to mortify His passions, but to manifest to carnal men the rule of abstinence.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 27.) Now Luke evidently relates that this was spoken not by men of themselves, but by others concerning them. How then does Matthew say, *Then came unto him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast*; unless that they themselves also came, and were all eager, as far as they were able, to put the question to Him?

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 18.) Now there are two fasts, one is in tribulation, to propitiate God for our sins; another in joy, when as carnal things delight us less, we feed the more on things spiritual. The Lord therefore being asked why His disciples did not fast, answered as to each fast. And first of the fast of tribulation; for it follows, *And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridegroom fast when the bridegroom is with them?*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 30. in Matt.) As if He should say, The present time is one of joy and gladness, sorrow must not then be mixed up with it.

Cyril of Alexandria. For the shewing forth of our Saviour in this world was nothing else but a great festival, (πανήγυρις) spiritually uniting our nature to Him as His bride, that she who was formerly barren might become fruitful. The children of the Bridegroom then are found to be those who have been called by Him through a new and evangelical discipline, but not the Scribes and Pharisees, who observe only the shadow of the law.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. ii. c. 27.) Now this which Luke alone mentions, *Ye cannot make the children of the bridegroom fast*, is understood to refer to those very men who said that they would make the children of the Bridegroom mourn and fast, since they were about to kill the Bridegroom.

Cyril of Alexandria. Having granted to the children of the Bridegroom that it was not fitting that they should be troubled, as they were keeping a spiritual feast, but that fasting should be abolished among them, He adds as a direction, *But the days shall come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast in those days.*

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. ii. qu. 18.) As if He said, Then shall they be desolate, and in sorrow and lamentation, until the joy of consolation shall be restored to them by the Holy Spirit.

Ambrose. Or, That fast is not given up whereby the flesh is mortified, and the desires of the body chastened. (For this fast commends us to God.) But we cannot fast who have Christ, and banquet on the flesh and blood of Christ.

Basil. The children of the Bridegroom also cannot fast, i. e. refuse nourishment to the soul, but live on every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Ambrose. But when are those days, in which Christ shall be taken away from us, since He has said, *I will be with you alway, even unto the end of the world?* But no one can take Christ away from you, unless you take yourself away from Him.

Bede. For as long as the Bridegroom is with us we both rejoice, and can neither fast nor mourn. But when He has gone away through our sins, then a fast must be declared and mourning be enjoined.

Ambrose. Lastly, it is spoken of the fast of the soul, as the context shews, for it follows, *But he said, No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old.* He calleth fasting an old garment, which the Apostle thought should be taken off, saying, *Put off the old man with his deeds.* (Col. 3:9.) In the same manner we have a series of precepts not to mix up the actions of the old and new man.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or else, The gift of the Holy Spirit being received, there is a kind of fast, which is of joy, which they who are already renewed to a spiritual life most seasonably celebrate. Before they receive this gift, He says they are as old garments, to which a new piece of cloth is most unsuitably sewed on, i. e. any part of the doctrine which relates to the soberness of the new life; for if this takes place, the very doctrine itself also is in a measure divided, for it teaches a general fast not from pleasant food only, but from all delight in temporal pleasures, the part of which that appertains to food He said ought not to be given to men still devoted to their old habits, for therein seems to be a rent, and it agreeth not with the old. He says also, that they are like to old skins, as it follows, *And no one putteth wine into old skins.*

Ambrose. The weakness of man's condition is exposed when our bodies are compared to the skins of dead animals.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But the Apostles are compared to old skins, who are more easily burst with new wine, i. e. with spiritual precepts, than contain them. Hence it follows, *Else the new wine will burst the skins, and the wine will be spilled.* But they were new skins at that time, when after the ascension of the Lord they received the Holy Spirit, when from desire of His consolation they were renewed by prayer and hope. Hence it follows, *But the new wine must be put into new bottles, and both are preserved.*

Bede. Inasmuch as wine refreshes us within, but garments cover us without, the garments are the good works which we do abroad, by which we shine before men; wine, the fervour of faith, hope, and charity. Or, The old skins are the Scribes and Pharisees, the new piece and the new wine the precepts of the Gospel.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. de Deit. Filii et SS.) For wine newly drawn forth, evaporates on account of the natural heat in the liquor, throwing off from itself the scum by natural action. Such wine is the new covenant, which the old skins because of their unbelief contain not, and are therefore burst by the excellence of the doctrine, and cause the grace of the Spirit to flow in vain; *because into an evil soul wisdom will not enter.* (Sap. 1:4.)

Bede. But to every soul which is not yet renewed, but goes on still in the old way of wickedness, the sacraments of new mysteries ought not to be given. They also who wish to mix the precepts of the Law with the Gospel, as the Galatians did, put new wine into old bottles. It follows, *No man also having drank old wine straightway desireth new, for he saith, the old is better.* For the Jews, imbued with the taste of their old life, despised the precepts of the new grace, and being defiled with the traditions of their ancestors, were not able to perceive the sweetness of spiritual words.

CHAP. 6

6:1–5

1. And it came to pass on the second sabbath after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

2. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days?

3. And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him;

4. How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the Priests alone?

5. And he said unto them, That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Ambrose. Not only in the form of expression, but in His very practice and mode of action, did the Lord begin to absolve man from the observance of the old law. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass that he went through the corn fields, &c.*

Bede. For His disciples having no opportunity for eating because the multitudes thronged so, were naturally hungry, but by plucking the ears of corn they relieved their hunger, which is a mark of a strict habit of life, not seeking for prepared meats, but mere simple food.

Theophylact. Now He says, *on the second sabbath after the first*, because the Jews called every feast a sabbath. For sabbath means *rest*. Frequently therefore was there feasting at the preparation, and they called the preparation a sabbath because of the feast, and hence they gave to the principal sabbath the name of the second-first, as being the second in consequence of the festival of the day preceding.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 39. in Matt.) For there was a double feast; one on the principal sabbath, another on the next solemn day succeeding, which was also called a sabbath.

Isidore of Peleusium. (Isidore l. i. Ep. 110.) He says, On the second-first, because it was the second day of the Passover, but the first of unleavened bread. Having killed the passover, on the very next day they kept the feast of unleavened bread. And it is plain that this was so from the fact, that the Apostles plucked ears of corn and ate them, for at that time the ears are weighed down by the fruit.

Epiphanius. (cont. Hær. l. i. Hær. xxx. 32.) On the sabbath day then they were seen passing through the corn fields, and eating the corn, shewing that the bonds of the sabbath were loosened, when the great Sabbath was come in Christ, Who made us to rest from the working of our iniquities.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the Pharisees and Scribes not knowing the Holy Scriptures agreed together to find fault with Christ's disciples, as it follows, *And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye, &c.* Tell me now, when a table is set before you on the sabbath day; do you not break bread? Why then do you blame others?

Bede. But some say that these things were objected to our Lord Himself; they might indeed have been objected by different persons, both to our Lord Himself and His disciples, but to whomsoever the objection is made, it chiefly refers to Him.

Ambrose. But the Lord proves the defenders of the law to be ignorant of what belongs to the law, bringing the example of David; as it follows, *And Jesus answering said to them, Have ye not read so much as this, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. As if He said, Whereas the law of Moses expressly says, *Give a righteous judgment, and ye shall not respect persons in judgment*, (Deut. 1:16, 17.) how now do ye blame My disciples, who even to this day extol David as a saint and prophet, though he kept not the commandment of Moses?

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) And mark, that whenever the Lord speaks for His servants, (i. e. His disciples,) He brings forward servants, as for example David and the Priests; but when for Himself, He introduces His Father; as in that place, *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* (John 5:17.)

Theophylact. But he reproves them in another way, as it is added, *And he said unto them, that the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.* As if he said, I am the Lord of the sabbath, as being He who ordained it, and as the Legislator I have power to loose the sabbath; for Christ was called the Son of man, who being the Son of God yet condescended in a miraculous manner to be made and called for man's sake the Son of man.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But Mark declares that He uttered this of our common nature, for He said, *The sabbath was made for man, not, man for the sabbath.* It is therefore more fitting that the sabbath should be subject to man, than that man should bow his neck to the sabbath.

Ambrose. But herein is a great mystery. For the field is the whole world, the corn is the abundant harvest of the saints in the seed of the human race, the ears of corn are the fruits of the Church, which the Apostles shaking off by their works fed upon, nourishing themselves with our increase, and by their mighty miracles, as it were out of the bodily husks, plucking forth the fruits of the mind to the light of faith.

Bede. For they bruise the ears in their hands, because, when they wish to bring others over into the body of Christ, they mortify their old man with its acts drawing them away from worldly thoughts.

Ambrose. Now the Jews thought this unlawful on the Sabbath, but Christ by the gift of new grace represented hereby the rest of the law, the work of grace. Wonderfully has He called it the second-first sabbath, not the first-second, because that was loosed from the law which was first, and this is made first which was ordained second. It is therefore called the second sabbath according to number, the first according to the grace of the work. For that sabbath is better where there is no penalty, than that where there is a penalty prescribed. Or this perhaps was first in the foreknowledge of wisdom, and second in the sanction of the ordinance. Now in David escaping with his companions, there was a foreshadowing of Christ in the law, who with His Apostles escaped the prince of the world. But how was it that the Observer and Defender of the law Himself both eat the bread, and gave it to those that were with Him, which no one was allowed to eat but the priests, except that He might shew by that figure that the priests' bread was to come over to the use of the people, or that we ought to imitate the priests' life, or that all the children of the Church are priests, for we are anointed into a holy priesthood,

offering ourselves a spiritual sacrifice to God. (1 Pet. 2:5.) But if the sabbath was made for men, and the benefit of men required that a man when hungry (having been long without the fruits of the earth) should forsake the abstinence of the old fast, the law is surely not broken but fulfilled.

6:6–11

6. And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

7. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him.

8. But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth.

9. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it?

10. And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Ambrose. The Lord now proceeds to another work. For He who had determined to make the whole man safe, was able to cure each member. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass also on another sabbath, that he entered into the synagogue and taught.*

Bede. He chiefly heals and teaches on the sabbaths, not only to convey the meaning of a spiritual sabbath, but because of the more numerous assembly of the people.

Cyril of Alexandria. But He taught things far beyond their comprehension, and opened to his hearers the way to future salvation by Him; and then after having first taught them, He suddenly shewed His divine power, as it follows, *and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.*

Bede. But since the Master had excused by an undeniable example the breach of the sabbath, with which they charged His disciples, their object is now by watching to bring a false accusation against the Master Himself. As it follows, *And the Scribes and Pharisees watched him, if he would heal on the sabbath*, that if He did not, they might accuse Him of cruelty or impotence; if He did, of violation of the sabbath. Hence it follows, *that they might find an accusation against him.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For this is the way of the envious man, he feeds in himself his pang of grief with the praises of others. But the Lord knew all things, and searches the hearts; as it follows, *But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand. And he arose, and stood forth*, that perchance he might stir up the cruel Pharisees to pity, and allay the flames of their passion.

Bede. But the Lord anticipating the false charge which they were preparing against Him, reproves those who by wrongly interpreting the law thought that they must rest on the sabbath-day even from good works; whereas the law commands us to abstain from servile works, i. e. from evil, on the sabbath. Hence it follows, *Then said Jesus unto them, I ask you, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. This is a very useful question, for if it is lawful to do good on the sabbath, and there is no reason why those who work should not obtain mercy from God, cease to gather up accusation against Christ. But if it be not lawful to do good on the sabbath, and the law prohibits the safety of life, thou art become the accuser of the law. For if we examine the very institution of the sabbath, we shall find it was introduced for an object of mercy, for God commanded to keep holy the sabbath, that may rest *thy man servant and thy maid servant, and all thy cattle.* (Exod. 20:23.) But he who has mercy on his ox, and the rest of his cattle, how much rather will he not have mercy on man troubled with a severe disease?

Ambrose. But the law by things present prefigured the form of things future, among which surely the days of rest to come are to be not from good works but from evil. For although secular works may be given up, yet it is no idle act of a good work to rest in the praise of God.

Augustine. (Qu. Ev. l. iii. qu. 7.) But though our Lord was healing the body, He asked this question, "is it lawful to save the soul or to lose it?" either because He performed His miracles on account of faith in which is the salvation of the soul; or, because the cure of the right hand signified the salvation of the soul, which ceasing to do good works, seemed in some measure to have a withered right hand, i. e. He placed the soul for the man, as men are wont to say, "So many souls were there."

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 35.) But it may be questioned how Matthew came to say, that they asked the Lord, *whether it was lawful to heal on the sabbath*, when Luke in this place states that they rather were asked of the Lord. We must therefore believe that they first asked the Lord, and that then He understanding by their thoughts that they sought an opportunity to accuse Him, placed the man in the midst whom He was going to heal, and asked the question which Mark and Luke relate Him to have asked. It follows, *And looking round about upon them all.*

Titus Bostrensis. When the eyes of all were, as it were, riveted together, and their minds also fixed upon the consideration of the matter, *he said to the man, Stretch forth thy hand*; I command thee, Who created man. But he who had the withered hand hears, and is made whole, as it follows, *And he stretched it, and it was restored.* But they who should have been astonished at the miracle, increased in malice; as it follows, *But they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they should do to Jesus.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. in Matt. 40.) And as Matthew relates, *they go out to take counsel, that they should kill him.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Thou perceivest, O Pharisee, a divine Worker, and Him Who delivers the sick by His heavenly power, and out of envy thou breathest forth death.

Bede. The man represents the human race, withered by the unfruitfulness of good works, because of the hand in our first parent stretched forth to take the apple, which was healed by the innocent hand stretched forth on the cross. And rightly was the withered hand in the synagogue, because where there is the greater gift of knowledge, there the transgressor lies under the greater blame.

Ambrose. You have heard then the words of Him who says, *Stretch forth thy hand.* That is a frequent and common cure, and thou that thinkest thy hand is whole, beware lest it be contracted by avarice or sacrilege. Stretch it forth oftener to help thy neighbour, to protect the widow, to save from injury him whom you see the victim of unjust attack; stretch it forth to the poor man who beseeches thee; stretch it forth to the Lord, to ask pardon of thy sins; as the

hand is stretched forth so is it healed. (1 Kings 13:5, 6.)

6:12–16

12. And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.

13. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;

14. Simon, (whom he also named Peter,) and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew,

15. Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16. And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

Gloss. (non occ.) When adversaries rose up against the miracles and teaching of Christ, He chose Apostles as defenders and witnesses of the truth, and prefaces their election with prayer; as it is said, *And it came to pass, &c.*

Ambrose. Let not thy ears be open to deceit, that thou shouldest think that the Son of God prays from want of strength, that He may obtain what He could not perform; for being Himself the Author of power, the Master of obedience, He leads us by His own example to the precepts of virtue.

Cyril of Alexandria. Let us examine then in the actions which Jesus did, how He teaches us to be instant in prayer to God, going apart by ourselves, and in secret, no one seeing us; putting aside also our worldly cares, that the mind may be raised up to the height of divine contemplation; and this we have marked in the fact, that Jesus went in to a mountain apart to pray.

Ambrose. Every where also He prays alone, for human wishes comprehend not the wisdom of God; and no one can be a partaker of the secrets of Christ. But not every one who prays ascends a mountain, he only who prays advancing from earthly things to higher, who is not anxious for the riches or honours of the world. All whose minds are raised above the world ascend the mountain. In the Gospel therefore you will find, that the disciples alone ascend the mountain with the Lord. But thou, O Christian, hast now the character given, the form prescribed which thou shouldest imitate; as it follows, *And he continued all night in prayer to God.* For what oughtest thou to do for thy salvation, when Christ continues all night in prayer for thee?

Chrysostom. (Hom. ad Pop. Ant. 42. et in Act. c. 16. Ed. Lat.) Rise then thou also at night time. The soul is then purer, the very darkness and great silence are in themselves enough to lead us to sorrow for our sins. But if thou lookest upon the heaven itself studded with stars as with unnumbered eyes, if thou thinkest that they who wanton and do unjustly in day time are then nothing different from the dead, thou wilt loathe all human undertakings. All these things serve to raise the mind. Vain-glory then disquiets not, no tumult of passion has the mastery; fire does not so destroy the rust of iron as nightly prayer the blight of sin. He whom the heat of the sun has fevered by day is refreshed by the dew; nightly tears are better than any dew, and are proof against desire and fear. But if a man is not cherished by the dew we speak of, he withers in the day. Wherefore although thou prayest not much at night, pray once with watching, and it is enough; shew that the night belongs not only to the body, but to the soul.

Ambrose. But what does it become thee to do when thou wouldest commence any work of piety, when Christ, about to send out His disciples, first prayed? for it follows, *And when it was day, he called his disciples, &c.* whom truly He destined to be the means of spreading the salvation of man through the world. Turn thy eyes also to the heavenly council. Not the wise men, not the rich, not the noble, but He chose to send out fishermen and publicans, that they might not seem to turn men to their grace by riches or by the influence of power and rank, and that the force of truth, not the graces of oratory, might prevail.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ut sup.) But mark the great carefulness of the Evangelist. He not only says that the holy Apostles were chosen, but he enumerates them by name, that no one should dare to insert any others in the catalogue; *Simon, whom he also called Peter, and Andrew his brother.*

Bede. He not only surnamed Peter first, but long before this, when he was brought by Andrew, it is said, *Thou shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone* (John 1:42.). But Luke, wishing to mention the names of the disciples, since it was necessary to call him Peter, wished shortly to imply that this was not his name before, but the Lord had given it to him.

Eusebius. The two next are James and John, as it follows, *James and John*, both indeed sons of Zebedee, who were also fishermen. After them he mentions *Philip and Bartholomew.* John says Philip was of Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. Bartholomew was a simple man, devoid of all worldly knowledge and guile. But Matthew was called from those who used to collect taxes; concerning whom he adds *Matthew and Thomas.*

Bede. Matthew places himself after his fellow-disciple Thomas, from humility, whereas by the other Evangelists he is put before him. It follows, *James the son of Alphæus, and Simon who is called Zelotes.*

Gloss. Because in truth he was of Cana in Galilee, which is interpreted zeal; and this is added to distinguish him from Simon Peter. It follows, *Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 30.) With respect to the name of Judas the brother of James, Luke seems to differ from Matthew, who calls him Thaddæus. But what prevented a man from being called by two or three names? Judas the traitor is chosen, not unwittingly but knowingly, for Christ had indeed taken to Himself the weakness of man, and therefore refused not even this share of human infirmity. He was willing to be betrayed by His own Apostle, that thou when betrayed by thy friend mayest bear calmly thy mistaken judgment, thy kindness thrown away.

Bede. But in a mystical sense the mountain on which our Lord chose His disciples represents the loftiness of justice in which they were to be instructed, and which they were to preach to others; so also the law was given on a mountain.

Cyril of Alexandria. But if we may learn the interpretation of the Apostles' names, know that Peter means, "loosening or knowing;" Andrew, "glorious power," or "answering;" but James, "apostle of grief;" John, "the grace of the Lord;" Matthew, "given;" Philip, "large mouth," or the "orifice of a torch;" Bartholomew, "the son of him who lets down water;" Thomas, "deep or twin;" James the son of Alphæus, "supplanter of the step of life;" Judas, "confession;" Simon, "obedience."

6:17–19

17. And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judæa, and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18. And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19. And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

Cyril of Alexandria. When the ordination of the Apostles was accomplished, and great numbers were collected together from the country of Judæa, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, (who were idolaters,) he gave the Apostles their commission to be the teachers of the whole world, that they might recal the Jews from the bondage of the law, but the worshippers of devils from their Gentile errors to the knowledge of the truth. Hence it is said, *And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and a great multitude from Judæa, and the sea coast, &c.*

Bede. By the sea coast he does not refer to the neighbouring sea of Galilee, because this would not be accounted wonderful, but it is so called from the great sea, and therein also Tyre and Sidon may be comprehended, of which it follows, *Both of Tyre and Sidon.* And these states being Gentile, are purposely named here, to indicate how great was the fame and power of the Saviour which had brought even the citizens of the coast to receive His healing and teaching. Hence it follows, *Which came to hear him.*

Theophylact. That is, for the cure of their souls; and that they might be healed of their diseases, that is, for the cure of their bodies.

Cyril of Alexandria. But after that the High Priest had made publicly known His choice of Apostles, He did many and great miracles, that the Jews and Gentiles who had assembled might know that these were invested by Christ with the dignity of the Apostleship, and that He Himself was not as another man, but rather was God, as being the Incarnate Word. Hence it follows, *And the whole multitude sought to touch him, for there went virtue out of him.* For Christ did not receive virtue from others, but since he was by nature God, sending out His own virtue upon the sick, He healed them all.

Ambrose. But observe all things carefully, how He both ascends with His Apostles and descends to the multitude; for how could the multitude see Christ but in a lowly place. It follows him not to the lofty places, it ascends not the heights. Lastly, when He descends, He finds the sick, for in the high places there can be no sick.

Bede. You will scarcely find any where that the multitudes follow our Lord to the higher places, or that a sick person is healed on a mountain; but having quenched the fever of lust and lit the torch of knowledge, each man approaches by degrees to the height of the virtues. But the multitudes which were able to touch the Lord are healed by the virtue of that touch, as formerly the leper is cleansed when our Lord touched him. The touch of the Saviour then is the work of salvation, whom to touch is to believe on Him, to be touched is to be healed by His precious gifts.

6:20–23

20. And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.

21. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh.

22. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.

23. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.

Cyril of Alexandria. After the ordination of the Apostles, the Saviour directed His disciples to the newness of the evangelical life.

Ambrose. But being about to utter His divine oracles, He begins to rise higher; although He stood in a low place, yet as it is said, *He lifted up his eyes*. What is lifting up the eyes, but to disclose a more hidden light?

Bede. And although He speaks in a general way to all, yet more especially He lifts up His eyes on His disciples; for it follows, *on his disciples*, that to those who receive the word listening attentively with the heart, He might reveal more fully the light of its deep meaning.

Ambrose. Now Luke mentions only four blessings, but Matthew eight; but in those eight are contained these four, and in these four those eight. For the one has embraced as it were the four cardinal virtues, the other has revealed in those eight the mystical number. For as the eighth[1] is the accomplishment of our hope, so is the eighth also the completion of the virtues. But each Evangelist has placed the blessings of poverty first, for it is the first in order, and the purest, as it were, of the virtues; for he who has despised the world shall reap an eternal reward. Now can any one obtain the reward of the heavenly kingdom who, overcome by the desires of the world, has no power of escape from them? Hence it follows, *He said, Blessed are the poor.*

Cyril of Alexandria. In the Gospel according to St. Matthew it is said, *Blessed are the poor in spirit*, that we should understand the poor in spirit to be one of a modest and somewhat depressed mind. Hence our Saviour says, *Learn from me, for I am meek and lowly of heart*. But Luke says, *Blessed are the poor*, without the addition of spirit, calling those poor who despise riches. For it became those who were to preach the doctrines of the saving Gospel to have no covetousness, but their affections set upon higher things.

Basil. (in Ps. 33.) But not every one oppressed with poverty is blessed, but he who has preferred the commandment of Christ to worldly riches. For many are poor in their possessions, yet most covetous in their disposition; these poverty does not save, but their affections condemn. For nothing involuntary deserves a blessing, because all virtue is characterized by the freedom of the will. Blessed then is the poor man as being the disciple of Christ, Who endured poverty for us. For the Lord Himself has fulfilled every work which leads to happiness, leaving Himself an example for us to follow.

Eusebius. But when the celestial kingdom is considered in the many gradations of its blessings, the first step in the scale belongs to those who by divine instinct embrace poverty. Such did He make those who first became His disciples; therefore He says in their person, *For yours is the kingdom of heaven*, as pointedly addressing Himself to those present, upon whom also He lifted up His eyes.

Cyril of Alexandria. After having commanded them to embrace poverty, He then crowns with honour those things which follow from poverty. It is the lot of those who embrace poverty to be in want of the necessaries of life, and scarcely to be able to get food. He does not then permit His disciples to be fainthearted on this account, but says, *Blessed are ye who hunger now.*

Bede. That is, blessed are ye who chasten your body and subject it to bondage, who in hunger and thirst give heed to the word, for then shall ye receive the fulness of heavenly joys.

Gregory of Nyssa. (de Beat. orat. 4.) But in a deeper sense, as they who partake of bodily food vary their appetites according to the nature of the things to be eaten; so also in the food of the soul, by some indeed that is desired which depends upon the opinion of men, by others, that which is essentially and of its own nature good. Hence, according to Matthew, men are blessed who account righteousness in the place of food and drink; by righteousness I mean not a particular but an universal virtue, which he who hungers after is said to be blessed.

Bede. Plainly instructing us, that we ought never to account ourselves sufficiently righteous, but always desire a daily increase in righteousness, to the perfect fulness of which the Psalmist shews us that we can not arrive in this world, but in the world to come. *I shall be satisfied when thy glory shall be made manifest* (Ps. 17:15.). Hence it follows, *For ye shall be filled.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) For to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness He promises abundance of the things they desire. For none of the pleasures which are sought in this life can satisfy those who pursue them. But the pursuit of virtue alone is followed by that reward, which implants a joy in the soul that never faileth.

Cyril of Alexandria. But poverty is followed not only by a want of those things which bring delight, but also by a dejected look, *because of sorrow.* Hence it follows, *Blessed are ye that weep.* He blesses those who weep, not those who merely drop tears from their eyes, (for this is common to the believing and unbelieving, when sorrow befals them,) but rather He calls those blessed, who shun a careless life, mixed up with sin, and devoted to carnal pleasures, and refuse enjoyments almost weeping from their hatred of all worldly things.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 18. ad pop. Ant.) But godly sorrow is a great thing, and it worketh repentance to salvation. Hence St. Paul when he had no failings of his own to weep for, mourned for those of others. Such grief is the source of gladness, as it follows, *For ye shall laugh.* For if we do no good to those for whom we weep, we do good to ourselves. For he who thus weeps for the sins of others, will not let his own go unwept for; but the rather he will not easily fall into sin. Let us not be ever relaxing ourselves in this short life, lest we sigh in that which is eternal. Let us not seek delights from which flow lamentation, and much sorrow, but let us be saddened with sorrow which brings forth pardon. We often find the Lord sorrowing, never laughing.

Basil. (Hom. de Grat. act.) But He promises laughing to those who weep; not indeed the noise of laughter from the mouth, but a gladness pure and unmixed with aught of sorrow.

Bede. He then who on account of the riches of the inheritance of Christ, for the bread of eternal life, for the hope of heavenly joys, desires to suffer weeping, hunger, and poverty, is blessed. But much more blessed is he who does not shrink to maintain these virtues in adversity. Hence it follows, *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you.* For although men hate, with their wicked hearts they can not injure the heart that is beloved by Christ, It follows, *And when they shall separate you.* Let them separate and expel you from the synagogue. Christ finds you out, and strengthens you. It follows; *And shall reproach you.* Let them reproach the name of the Crucified, He Himself raises together with Him those that have died with Him, and makes them sit in heavenly places. It follows, *And cast out your name as evil.* Here he means the name of Christian, which by Jews and Gentiles as far as they were able was frequently erased from the memory, and east out by men, when there was no cause for hatred, but the Son of man; for in truth they who believed on the name of Christ, wished to be called after His name. Therefore He teaches that they are to be persecuted by men, but are to be blessed beyond men. As it follows, *Rejoice ye in that day, and weep for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven.*

Chrysostom. Great and little are measured by the dignity of the speaker. Let us enquire then who promised the great reward. If indeed a prophet or an apostle, little had been in his estimation great; but now it is the Lord in whose hands are eternal treasures and riches surpassing man's conception, who has promised great reward.

Basil. (Hom. 6. in Hex.) Again, *great* has sometimes a positive signification, as the heaven is great, and the earth is great; but sometimes it has relation to something else, as a great ox or great horse, on comparing two things of like nature. I think then that great reward will be laid up for those who suffer reproach for Christ's sake, not as in comparison with those things in our power, but as being in itself great because given by God.

Damascene. (in lib. de Logic c. 49.) Those things which may be measured or numbered are used definitely, but that which from a certain excellence surpasses all measure and number we call great and much indefinitely; as when we say that great is the longsuffering of God.

Eusebius. He then fortifies His disciples against the attacks of their adversaries, which they were about to suffer as they preached through the whole world; adding, *For in like manner did their fathers to the prophets.*

Ambrose. For the Jews persecuted the prophets even to death.

Bede. They who speak the truth commonly suffer persecution, yet the ancient prophets did not therefore from fear of persecution turn away from preaching the truth.

Ambrose. In that He says, *Blessed are the poor*, thou hast temperance; which abstains from sin, tramples upon the world, seeks not vain delights. In *Blessed are they that hunger*, thou hast righteousness; for he who hungers suffers together with the hungry, and by suffering together with him gives to him, by giving becomes righteous, and his righteousness abideth for ever. In *Blessed are they that weep now* (Ps. 112:9.), thou hast prudence; which is to weep for the things of time, and to seek those which are eternal. In *Blessed are ye when men hate you*, thou hast fortitude; not that which deserves hatred for crime, but which suffers persecution for faith. For so thou wilt attain to the crown of suffering, if thou slightest the favour of men, and seekest that which is from God.

Temperance therefore brings with it a pure heart; righteousness, mercy; prudence, peace; fortitude, meekness. The virtues are so joined and linked to one another, that he who has one seems to have many; and the Saints have each one especial virtue, but the more abundant virtue has the richer reward. What hospitality in Abraham, what humility, but because he excelled in faith, he gained the preeminence above all others. To every one there are many rewards because many incentives to virtue, but that which is most abundant in a good action, has the most exceeding reward.

6:24–26

24. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation.

25. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.

26. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Cyril of Alexandria. Having said before that poverty for God's sake is the cause of every good thing, and that hunger and weeping will not be without the reward of the saints, he goes on to denounce the opposite to these as the source of condemnation and punishment. *But woe unto you rich, for ye have your consolation.*

Chrysostom. For this expression, *woe*, is always said in the Scriptures to those who cannot escape from future punishment.

Ambrose. But although in the abundance of wealth many are the allurements to crime, yet many also are the incitements to virtue. Although virtue requires no support, and the offering of the poor man is more commendable than the liberality of the rich, still it is not those who possess riches, but those who know not how to use them, that are condemned by the authority of the heavenly sentence. For as that poor man is more praiseworthy who gives without grudging, so is the rich man more guilty, who ought to return thanks for what he has received, and not to hide without using it the sum which was given him for the common good. It is not therefore the money, but the heart of the possessor which is in fault. And though there be no heavier punishment than to be preserving with anxious fear what is to serve for the advantage of successors, yet since the covetous desires are fed by a certain pleasure of amassing, they who have had their consolation in the present life, have lost an eternal reward. We may here however understand by the rich man the Jewish people, or the heretics, or at least the Pharisees, who, rejoicing in an abundance of words, and a kind of hereditary pride of eloquence, have overstepped the simplicity of true faith, and gained to themselves useless treasures.

Bede. *Woe to you that are full, for ye shall be hungry.* That rich man clothed in purple was full, feasting sumptuously every day, but endured in hunger that dreadful "woe," when from the finger of Lazarus, whom he had despised, he begged a drop of water.

Basil. (Reg. fus. tract. 16–19.) Now it is plain that the rule of abstinence is necessary, because the Apostle mentions it among the fruits of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:23.) For the subjection of the body is by nothing so obtained as by abstinence, whereby, as it were a bridle, it becomes us to keep in check the fervour of youth. Abstinence then is the putting to death of sin, the extirpation of passions, the beginning of the spiritual life, blunting in itself the sting of temptations. But lest there should be any agreement with the enemies of God, we must accept every thing as the occasion requires, to shew, that to *the pure all things are pure* (Tit. 1:15.), by coming indeed to the necessaries of life, but abstaining altogether from those which conduce to pleasure. But since it is not possible that all should keep the same hours, or the same manner, or the same proportion, still let there be one purpose, never to wait to be filled, for fulness of stomach makes the body itself also unfit for its proper functions, sleepy, and inclined to what is hurtful.

Bede. In another way. If those are happy who always hunger after the works of righteousness, they on the other hand are counted to be unhappy, who, pleasing themselves in their own desires, suffer no hunger after the true good. It follows, *Woe to you who laugh, &c.*

Basil. (ut sup.) Whereas the Lord reproves those who laugh now, it is plain that there will never be a house of laughter to the faithful, especially since there is so great a multitude of those who die in sin for whom we must mourn. Excessive laughter is a sign of want of moderation, and the motion of an unrestrained spirit; but ever to express the feelings of our heart with a pleasantness of countenance is not unseemly.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 6. in Matt.) But tell me, why art thou distracting and wasting thyself away with pleasures, who must stand before the awful judgment, and give account of all things done here?

Bede. But because flattery being the very nurse of sin, like oil to the flames, is wont to minister fuel to those who are on fire with sin, he adds, *Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you.*

Chrysostom. What is said here is not opposed to what our Lord says elsewhere, *Let your light shine before men*; (Matt. 5:16.) that is, that we should be eager to do good for the glory of God, not our own. For vain-glory is a baneful thing, and from hence springs iniquity, and despair, and avarice, the mother of evil. But if thou seekest to turn away from this, ever raise thy eyes to God, and be content with that glory which is from Him. For if in all things we must choose the more learned for judges, how dost thou trust to the many the decision of virtue, and not rather to Him, who before all others knoweth it, and can give and reward it, whose glory therefore if thou desirest, avoid the praise of men. For no one more excites our admiration than he who rejects glory. And if we do this, much more does the God of all. Be mindful then, that the glory of men quickly faileth, seeing in the course of time it is past into oblivion. It follows, *For so did their fathers to the false prophets.*

Bede. By the false prophets are meant those, who to gain the favour of the multitude attempt to predict future events. The Lord on the mountain pronounces only the blessings of the good, but on the plain he describes also the "woe" of the wicked, because the yet uninstructed hearers must first be brought by terrors to good works, but the perfect need but be invited by rewards.

Ambrose. And mark, that Matthew by rewards called the people to virtue and faith, but Luke also frightened them from their sins and iniquities by the denunciation of future punishment.

6:27–31

27. But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you,

28. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you.

29. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

30. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.

31. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

Bede. Having spoken above of what they might suffer from their enemies, He now points out how they ought to conduct themselves towards their enemies, saying, *But I say to you who hear.*

Ambrose. Having proceeded in the enumeration of many heavenly actions, He not unwisely comes to this place last, that He might teach the people confirmed by the divine miracles to march onward in the footsteps of virtue beyond the path of the law. Lastly, among the three greatest, (hope, faith, and charity,) the greatest is charity, which is commanded in these words, *Love your enemies.*

Basil. (in reg. brev. 176.) It is indeed the part of an enemy to injure and be treacherous. Every one then who does harm in any way to any one is called his enemy.

Cyril of Alexandria. But this way of life was well adapted to the holy teachers who were about to preach throughout the earth the word of salvation, and if it had been their will to take vengeance upon their persecutors, had failed to call them to the knowledge of salvation.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 18. in Matt.) But He says not, Do not hate, but *love*; nor did He merely command to love, but also to do good, as it follows, *Do good to them which hate you.*

Basil. (ubi sup.) But because man consists of body and soul, to the soul indeed we shall do this good, by reproving and admonishing such men, and leading them by the hand to conversion; but to the body, by profiting them in the necessaries of life.

It follows, *Bless them that curse you.*

Chrysostom. For they who pierce their own souls deserve tears and weeping, not curses. For nothing is more hateful than a cursing heart, or more foul than a tongue which utters curses. O man, spit not forth the poison of asps, nor be turned into a beast. Thy mouth was given thee not to bite with, but to heal the wounds of others. But he commands us to count our enemies in the rank of our friends, not only in a general way, but as our particular friends for whom we are accustomed to pray; as it follows, *Pray for them which persecute you.* But many on the contrary falling down, and striking their faces upon the ground, and stretching forth their hands, pray God not for their sins, but against their enemies, which is nothing else but piercing their own selves. When thou prayest to Him that He would hear thee cursing thy enemies, who has forbidden thee to pray against thy enemies, how is it possible for thee to be heard, since thou art calling Him to hear thee by striking an enemy in the king's presence, not with the hand indeed, but with thy words. What art thou doing, O man? thou standest to obtain pardon of your sins, and thou fillest thy mouth with bitterness. It is a time of forgiveness, prayer, and mourning, not of rage.

Bede. But the question is fairly raised, how it is that in the prophets are to be found many curses against their enemies. Upon which we must observe, that the prophets in the imprecations they uttered foretold the future, and that not with the feelings of one who wishes, but in the spirit of one who foresees.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now the old law commanded us not to injure one another; or if we are first injured, not to extend our wrath beyond the measure of the injurer, but the fulfilling of the law is in Christ and in His commands. Hence it follows, *And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 18. in Matt.) For physicians also, when they are attacked by madmen, have then most compassion on them, and exert themselves to restore them. Have thou also a like consideration towards thy persecutors; for it is they who are under the greatest infirmity. And let us not cease until they have exhausted all their bitterness, they will then overpower thee with thanks, and God Himself will give thee a crown, because thou hast delivered thy brother from the worst disease.

Basil. (in Esai. 1, 23. in App.) But we almost all of us offend against this command, and especially the powerful and rulers, not only if they have suffered insult, but if respect is not paid them, accounting all those their enemies who treat them with less consideration than they think they deserve. But it is a great dishonour in a prince to be ready to take revenge. For how shall he teach another, *to return to no man evil for evil* (Rom. 12:17.), if he is eager to retaliate on him who injures him.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the Lord would moreover have us to be despisers of property. As it follows, *And him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.* For this is the soul's virtue, which is altogether alien from feeling the pleasure of wealth. For it becomes him who is merciful even to forget his misfortunes, that we may confer the same benefits upon our persecutors, whereby we assist our dear friends.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Now He said not, Bear humbly the rule of thy persecutor, but, Go on wisely, and prepare thyself to suffer what he desires thee to do; overcoming his insolence by thy great prudence, that he may depart with shame at thy excellent endurance.

But some one will say, *How can this be?* When thou hast seen God made man, and suffering so many things for thee, dost thou still ask and doubt how it is possible to pardon the iniquities of thy fellow servants? Who has suffered what thy God has, when He was bound, scourged, enduring to be spat upon, suffering death? Here it follows, *But to every one who seeks, give.*

Augustine. (de Serm. Dom. lib. 1. c. 20.) He says not, To him that seeketh give all things, but give what you justly and honestly can, that is, what as far as man can know or believe, neither hurts you, nor another: and if thou hast justly refused any one, the justice must be declared to him, (so as not to send him away empty,) sometimes thou wilt confer even a greater boon when thou hast corrected him who seeks what he ought not.

Chrysostom. Herein however we do not lightly err, when not only we give not to those who seek, but also blame them? Why (you say) does he not work, why is the idle man fed? Tell me, dost thou then possess by labour? but still if thou workest, dost thou work for this, that thou shouldest blame another? For a single loaf and coat dost thou call a man covetous? Thou givest nothing, make then no reproaches. Why dost thou neither take pity thyself, and dissuadest those who would? If we spend upon all indifferently, we shall always have compassion: for because Abraham entertains all, he also entertains angels. For if a man is a homicide and a robber, does he not, thinkest thou, deserve to have bread? Let us not then be severe censors of others, lest we too be strictly judged.

It follows, *And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 10. in 1 Cor.) Every thing we have we receive from God. But when we speak of "mine and thine," they are only bare words. For if you assert a house to be yours, you have uttered an expression which wants the substance of reality. For both the air, the soil, and the moisture, are the Creator's. Thou again art he who has built the house; but although the use is thine, it is doubtful, not only because of death, but also on account of the issues of things. Thy soul is not thy own possession, and will be reckoned to thee in like manner as all thy goods. God wishes those things to be thine

which are entrusted to thee for thy brethren, and they will be thine if thou hast dispensed them for others. But if thou hast spent richly upon thyself what things are thine, they are now become another's. But through a wicked desire of wealth men strive together in a state contrary to Christ's words, *And of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.*

Augustine. (de Ser. Dom. lib. 1. c. 19.) He says this of garments, houses, farms, beasts of burdens, and generally of all property. But a Christian ought not to possess a slave as he does a horse or money. If a slave is more honourably governed by thee than by him who desires to take him from thee, I know not whether any one would dare to say, that he ought to be despised, as a garment (ut vestimentum.)

Chrysostom. (Hom. 13. ad Pop. Ant.) Now we have a natural law implanted in us, by which we distinguish between what is virtue, and what is vice. Hence it follows, *And as ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them.* He does not say, Whatever ye would not that men should do unto you, do not ye. For since there are two ways which lead to virtue, namely, abstaining from evil, and doing good, he names one, signifying by it the other also. And if indeed He had said, That ye may be men, love the beasts, the command would be a difficult one. But if they are commanded to love men, which is a natural admonition, wherein lies the difficulty, since even the wolves and lions observe it, whom a natural relation compels to love one another. It is manifest then that Christ has ordained nothing surpassing our nature, but what He had long before implanted in our conscience, so that thy own will is the law to thee. And if thou wilt have good done unto thee, thou must do good to others; if thou wilt that another should shew mercy to thee, thou must shew mercy to thy neighbour.

6:32–36

32. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.

36. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

Chrysostom. (Hom. i. in Col.) The Lord had said that we must love our enemies, but that you might not think this an exaggerated expression, regarding it solely as spoken to alarm them, he adds the reason, saying, *For if you love them which love you, what thank have ye?* There are indeed several causes which produce love; but spiritual love exceeds them all. For nothing earthly engenders it, neither gain, nor kindness, nor nature, nor time, but it descends from heaven. But why wonder that it needs not kindness to excite it, when it is not even overcome of malice? A father indeed suffering wrong bursts the bands of love. A wife after a quarrel leaves her husband. A son, if he sees his father come to a great age, is troubled. But Paul went to those who stoned him to do them good. (Acts 14:17) Moses is stoned by the Jews, and prays for them. (Exod. 17:4) Let us then reverence spiritual love, for it is indissoluble. Reproving therefore those who were inclined to wax cold, he adds, *For sinners even love those which love them.* As if he said, Because I wish you to possess more than these, I do not advise you only to love your friends, but also your enemies. It is common to all to do good to those who do good to them. But he shews that he seeks something more than is the custom of sinners, who do good to their friends. Hence it follows, *And if you do good to those who do good to you, what thank have ye?*

Bede. But he not only condemns as unprofitable the love and kindness of sinners, but also the lending. As it follows, *And if ye lend to those from whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.*

Ambrose. Now philosophy seems to divide justice into three parts; one towards God, which is called *piety*; another towards our parents, or the rest of mankind; a third to the dead, that the proper rites may be performed. But the Lord Jesus passing beyond the oracle of the law, and the heights of prophecy, extended the duties of piety to those also who have injured us, adding, *But love your enemies.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 58. in Gen.) Whereby thou wilt confer more upon thyself than him. For he is beloved by a fellow servant, but thou art made like unto God. But it is a mark of the greatest virtue when we embrace with kindness those who wish to do us harm. Hence it follows, *And do good.* For as water, when cast upon a lighted furnace, extinguishes it, so also reason joined with gentleness. But what water is to fire, such is lowliness and meekness to wrath; and as fire is not extinguished by fire, so neither is anger soothed by anger.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. cont. usurar.) But man ought to shun that baneful anxiety with which he seeks from the poor man increase of his money and gold, exacting a profit of barren metals. Hence he adds, *And lend, hoping for nothing again*, &c. If a man should call the harsh calculation of interest, theft, or homicide, he will not err. For what is the difference, whether a man by digging under a wall become possessed of property, or possess it unlawfully by the compulsory rate of interest?

Basil. (Hom. in Ps. 14.) Now this mode of avarice is rightly called in the Greek τόκος, from producing, because of the fruitfulness of the evil. Animals in course of time grow up and produce, but interest as soon as it is born begins to bring forth. Animals which bring forth most rapidly cease soonest from breeding, but the money of the avaricious goes on increasing with time. Animals when they transfer their bringing forth to their own young, themselves cease to breed, but the money of the covetous both produces an increase, and renews the capital. Touch not then the destructive monster. For what advantage that the poverty of to-day is escaped, if it falls upon us repeatedly, and is increased? Reflect then how canst thou restore thyself? Whence shall thy money be so multiplied as that it will partly relieve thy want, partly refresh thy capital, and besides bring forth interest? But thou sayest, How shall I get my living? I answer, work, serve, last of all, beg; any thing is more tolerable than borrowing upon interest. But thou sayest, what is that lending to which the hope of repayment is not attached? Consider the excellence of the words, and thou wilt admire the mercifulness of the author. When thou art about to give to a poor man from regard to divine charity, it is both a lending and a gift; a gift indeed, because no return is hoped for; lending, because of the beneficence of God, who restores it in its turn. Hence it follows, *And great shall be your reward.* Dost thou not wish the Almighty to be bound to restore to thee? Or, should He make some rich citizen thy security, dost thou accept him, but reject God standing as security for the poor?

Chrysostom. (Hom. 3. in. Gen.) Observe the wonderful nature of lending, one receives and another binds himself for his debts, giving a hundred fold at the present time, and in the future eternal life.

Ambrose. How great the reward of mercy which is received into the privilege of divine adoption! For it follows, *And ye shall be the sons of the Highest* (Ps. 82:6.). Follow then mercy, that ye may obtain grace. Widely spread is the mercy of God; He pours His rain upon the unthankful, the fruitful earth refuses not its increase to the evil. Hence it follows, *For he is kind to the unthankful, and to the evil.*

Bede. Either by giving them temporal gifts, or by inspiring His heavenly gifts with a wonderful grace.

Cyril of Alexandria. Great then is the praise of mercy. For this virtue makes us like unto God, and imprints upon our souls certain signs as it were of a heavenly nature. Hence it follows, *Be ye then merciful, as your heavenly Father also is merciful.*

Athanasius. (Orat. 3. cont. Arian.) That is to say, that we beholding His mercies, what good things we do should do them not with regard to men, but to Him, that we may obtain our rewards from God, not from men.

6:37–38

37. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38. Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

Ambrose. The Lord added, that we must not readily judge others, lest when conscious of guilt thyself, thou shouldest be compelled to pass sentence upon another.

Chrysostom. Judge not thy superior, that is, thou a disciple must not judge thy master, nor a sinner the innocent. Thou must not blame them, but advise and correct with love; neither must we pass judgment in doubtful and indifferent matters, which bear no resemblance to sin, or which are not serious or forbidden.

Cyril of Alexandria. He here expresses that worst inclination of our thoughts or hearts, which is the first beginning and origin of a proud disdain. For although it becomes men to look into themselves and walk after God, this they do not, but look into the things of others, and while they forget their own passions, behold the infirmities of some, and make them a subject of reproach.

Chrysostom. You will not easily find any one, whether a father of a family or an inhabitant of the cloister, free from this error. But these are the wiles of the tempter. For he who severely sifts the fault of others, will never obtain acquittal for his own. Hence it follows, *And ye shall not be judged.* For as the merciful and meek man dispels the rage of sinners, so the harsh and cruel adds to his own crimes.

Gregory of Nyssa. Be not then rash to judge harshly of your servants, lest ye suffer the like. For passing judgment calls down a heavier condemnation; as it follows, *Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned.* For he does not forbid judgment with pardon.

Bede. Now in a short sentence he concisely sums up all that he had enjoined with respect to our conduct towards our enemies, saying, *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven*, wherein he bids us forgive injuries, and shew kindness, and our sins shall be forgiven us, and we shall receive eternal life.

Cyril of Alexandria. But that we shall receive more abundant recompense from God, who gives bountifully to those who love him, he explains as follows, *Good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall they give into your bosom.*

Theophylact. As if he says, As when you wish to measure meal without sparing, you press it down, shake it together, and let it pour over abundantly; so the Lord will give a large and overflowing measure into your bosom.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 8.) But he says, *shall they give*, (Mat. 10:42.) because through the merits of those to whom they have given even a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, shall they be thought worthy to receive a heavenly reward. It follows, *For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.*

Basil. (Hom. in Ps. 61.) For according to the same measure with which each one of you metes, that is, in doing good works or sinning, will he receive reward or punishment.

Theophylact. But some one will put the subtle question, "If the return is made overabundantly, how is it the same measure?" to which we answer, that He said not, "In just as great a measure shall it be measured to you again, but in the same measure." For he who has shewn mercy, shall have mercy shewn unto him, and this is measuring again with the same measure; but our Lord spoke of *the measure running over*, because to such a one He will shew mercy a thousand times. So also in judging; for he that judges and afterwards is judged receives the same measure. But as far as he was judged the more severely that he judged one like unto himself, was the measure running over.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the Apostle explains this when he says, *He who sows sparingly*, (that is, scantily, and with a niggardly hand,) *shall also reap sparingly*, (2 Cor. 6:9.) (that is, not abundantly,) and he who sows blessings, shall reap also blessings, that is, bountifully. But if a man has not, and performs not, he is not guilty. For a man is accepted in that which he has, not in that which he has not.

6:39–42

39. And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40. The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master.

41. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42. Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Lord added to what had gone before a very necessary parable, as it is said, *And he spake a parable to them*, for His

disciples were the future teachers of the world, and it therefore became them to know the way of a virtuous life, having their minds illuminated as it were by a divine brightness, that they should not be blind leaders of the blind. And then he adds, *Can the blind lead the blind?* But if any should chance to attain unto an equal degree of virtue with their teachers, let them stand in the measure of their teachers, and follow their footsteps. Hence it follows, *The disciple is not above his master.* Hence also Paul says, *Be ye also followers of me, as I am of Christ* (1 Cor. 1:11.). Since Christ therefore judged not, why judgest thou? for He came not to judge the world, but to shew mercy.

Theophylact. Or else, If thou judgest another, and in the very same way sinnest thyself, art not thou like to the blind leading the blind? For how canst thou lead him to good when thou also thyself committest sin? For the disciple is not above his master. If therefore thou sinnest, who thinkest thyself a master and guide, where will he be who is taught and led by thee? For he will be the perfect disciple who is as his master.

Bede. Or the sense of this sentence depends upon the former, in which we are enjoined to give alms, and forgive injuries. If, says He, anger has blinded thee against the violent, and avarice against the grasping, how canst thou with thy corrupt heart cure his corruption? If even thy Master Christ, who as God might revenge His injuries, chose rather by patience to render His persecutors more merciful, it is surely binding on His disciples, who are but men, to follow the same rule of perfection.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 9.) Or, He has added the words, *Can the blind, lead the blind*, in order that they might not expect to receive from the Levites that measure of which He says, *They shall give into thy bosom*, because they gave tithes to them. And these He calls blind, because they received not the Gospel, that the people might the rather now begin to hope for that reward through the disciples of the Lord, whom wishing to point out as His imitators, He added, *The disciple is not above his master.*

Theophylact. But the Lord introduces another parable taken from the same figure, as follows, *But why seest thou the mote* (that is, the slight fault) *which is in thy brother's eye, but the beam which is in thine own eye* (that is, thy great sin) *thou regardest not?*

Bede. Now this has reference to the previous parable, in which He forewarned them that the blind cannot be led by the blind, that is, the sinner corrected by the sinner. Hence it is said, *Or, how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother let me cast out the mote that is in thine eye, if thou seest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*

Cyril of Alexandria. As if He said, How can he who is guilty of grievous sins, (which He calls the beam,) condemn him who has sinned only slightly, or even in some cases not at all? For this the mote signifies.

Theophylact. But these words are applicable to all, and especially to teachers, who while they punish the least sins of those who are put under them, leave their own unpunished. Wherefore the Lord calls them hypocrites, because to this end judge they the sins of others, that they themselves might seem just. Hence it follows, *Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. That is to say, first shew thyself clean from great sins, and then afterwards shalt thou give counsel to thy neighbour, who is guilty only of slight sins.

Basil. (Hom. 9, in Hexameron.) In truth, self knowledge seems the most important of all. For not only the eye, looking at outward things, fails to exercise its sight upon itself, but our understanding also, though very quick in apprehending the sin of another, is slow to perceive its own defects.

6:43–45

43. For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

44. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.

45. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

Bede. Our Lord continues the words which He had begun against the hypocrites, saying, *For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit*; i. e. as if He says, If thou wouldest have a true and unfeigned righteousness, what thou settest forth in words make up also in works, for the hypocrite though he pretends to be good is not good, who doeth evil works; and the innocent though he be blamed, is not therefore evil, who doeth good works.

Titus Bostrensis. But take not these words to thyself as an encouragement to idleness, for the tree is moved conformably to its nature, but thou hast the exercise of free will; and every barren tree has been ordained for some good, but thou wert created unto the good work of virtue.

Isidore of Peleusium. (lib. iv. ep. 81.) He does not then exclude repentance, but a continuance in evil, which as long as it is evil cannot bring forth good fruit, but being converted to virtue, will yield abundance. But what nature is to the tree, our affections are to us. If then a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, how shall a corrupt heart?

Chrysostom. (Hom. 42. in Matt.) But although the fruit is caused by the tree, yet it brings to us the knowledge of the tree, because the distinctive nature of the tree is made evident by the fruit, as it follows, *For every tree is known by its fruit.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Each man's life also will be a criterion of his character. For not by extrinsic ornaments and pretended humility is the beauty of true happiness discovered, but by those things which a man does; of which he gives an illustration, adding, *For of thorns men do not gather figs.*

Ambrose. On the thorns of this world the fig cannot be found, which as being better in its second fruit, is well fitted to be a similitude of the resurrection. Either because, as you read, *The fig trees have put forth their green figs,* (Cant. 2:13.) that is, the unripe and worthless fruit came first in the Synagogue. Or because our life is imperfect in the flesh, perfect in the resurrection, and therefore we ought to cast far from us worldly cares, which eat into the mind and scorch up the soul, that by diligent culture we may obtain the perfect fruits. This therefore has reference to the world and the resurrection, the next to the soul and the body, as it follows, *Nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes.* Either because no one living in sin obtains fruit to his soul, which like the grape nearest the ground is rotten, on the higher branches becomes ripe. Or because no one can escape the condemnations of the flesh, but he whom Christ has redeemed, Who as a grape hung on the tree.

Bede. Or, I think the thorns and bramble are the cares of the world and the prickings of sin, but the figs and the grapes are the sweetness of a new life

and the warmth of love, but the fig is not gathered from the thorns nor the grape from the bramble, because the mind still debased by the habits of the old man may pretend to, but cannot bring forth the fruits of the new man. But we must know, that as the fruitful palm tree is inclosed and supported by a hedge, and the thorn bearing fruit not its own, preserves it for the use of man, so the words and acts of the wicked wherein they serve the good are not done by the wicked themselves, but by the wisdom of God working upon them.

Cyril of Alexandria. But having shewn that the good and the bad man may be discerned by their works as a tree by its fruits, he now sets forth the same thing by another figure, saying, *A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth that which is evil.*

Bede. The treasure of the heart is the same as the root of the tree. He therefore who has in his heart the treasure of patience and perfect love, brings forth the best fruits, loving his enemy, and doing the other things which have been taught above. But he who keeps a bad treasure in his heart does the contrary to this.

Basil. The quality of the words shews the heart from which they proceed, plainly manifesting the inclination of our thoughts. Hence it follows, *For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 42. in Matt.) For it is a natural consequence when wickedness abounds within, that wicked words are breathed as far as the mouth; and therefore when you hear of a man uttering abominable things, do not suppose that there lies only so much wickedness in him as is expressed in his words, but believe the fountain to be more copious than the stream.

Bede. By the *speaking of the mouth* the Lord signifies all things, which by word, or deed, or thought, we bring forth from the heart. For it is the manner of the Scripture to put words for deeds.

6:46–49

46. And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47. Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like:

48. He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock.

49. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth: against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great.

Bede. Lest any one should vainly flatter himself with the words, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, as if words only and not rather works were required of a Christian, our Lord adds the following, *But why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?* As if He said, Why do ye boast of sending forth the leaves of a right confession, and shew forth no fruit of good works.

Cyril of Alexandria. But Lordship both in name and reality belongs only to the Highest Nature.

Athanasius. (in Orat. cont. Sabell.) This is not then the word of man, but the Word of God, manifesting His own birth from the Father, for He is the Lord Who is born of the Lord alone. But fear not the duality of Persons, for they are not separate in nature.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the advantage which arises from the keeping of the commandments, or the loss from disobedience, he shews as follows; *Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, he is like to a man who built his house upon a rock, &c.*

Bede. The rock is Christ. He digs deep; by the precepts of humility He plucks out all earthly things from the hearts of the faithful, lest they should serve God from regard to their temporal good.

Basil. (in Princ. Prov.) But lay your foundations upon a rock, that is, lean upon the faith of Christ, so as to persevere immoveable in adversity, whether it come from man or God.

Bede. Or the foundation of the house is the resolution to live a good life, which the perfect hearer firmly lays in fulfilling the commandments of God.

Ambrose. Or, He teaches that the obedience to heavenly precepts is the foundation of all virtue, by means of which this our house can be moved neither by the torrent of pleasures, nor by the violence of spiritual wickedness, neither by the storms of this world, nor by the cloudy disputations of heretics; hence it follows, *But the flood came, &c.*

Bede. A flood comes in three ways, either by unclean spirits, or wicked men, or the very restlessness of mind or body; and as far as men trust in their own strength they fall away, but as long as they cling to the immoveable rock they cannot even be shaken.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 24. in Matt.) The Lord also shews us that faith profiteth a man nothing, if his manner of life be corrupt. Hence it follows, *But he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man, that without a foundation, built an house upon the earth, &c.*

Bede. The house of the devil is the world which lieth in wickedness, (1 John 5:19.) which he builds upon the earth, because those who obey him he drags down from heaven to earth; he builds without foundation, for sin has no foundation, standing not by its own nature, for evil is without substance, which yet whatever it is, grows up in the nature of good. But because the foundation is called so from *fundus*, we may not unfitly understand that *fundamentum* is placed here *for fundus*. As then he who is fallen into a well is kept at the bottom of the well, so the soul falling away remains stationary, as it were, at the very bottom, as long as it continues in any measure of sin. But not content with the sin into which it is fallen, while daily sinking into worse, it can find no bottom, as it were, in the well to which it may fix itself. But every kind of temptation increasing, both the really bad and the feignedly good become worse, until at last they come to everlasting punishment. Hence it follows, *Against which the stream did beat vehemently.* By the force of the stream may be understood the trial of the last judgment, when both houses being finished, *the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.* (Mat. 25:46.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Or they build upon the earth without foundation, who upon the quicksand of doubt, which relates to opinion, lay the foundation of

their spiritual building, which a few drops of temptation wash away.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. ii. 19.) Now this long discourse of our Lord, Luke begins in the same way as Matthew; for each says, *Blessed are the poor.* Then many things which follow in the narration of each are like, and finally the conclusion of the discourse is found to be altogether the same, I mean with respect to the men who build upon the rock and the sand. It might then easily be supposed that Luke has inserted the same discourse of our Lord, and yet has left out some sentences which Matthew has kept, and likewise put in others which Matthew has not; were it not that Matthew says the discourse was spoken by our Lord on the mountain, but Luke on the plain by our Lord standing. It is not however thought likely from this that these two discourses are separated by a long course of time, because both before and after both have related some things like, or the same. It may however have happened that our Lord was at first on a higher part of the mountain with His disciples alone, and that then he descended with them from the mount, that is, from the summit of the mountain to the flat place, that is, to some level ground, which was on the side of the mountain, and was able to hold large multitudes, and that there He stood until the crowds were gathered together to Him, and afterwards when He sat down His disciples came nearer, and to them, and the rest of the multitude who were present, He held the same discourse.

CHAP. 7

7:1–10

1. Now when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5. For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof:

7. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

9. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

10. And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick.

Titus Bostrensis. When He had strengthened His disciples by more perfect teaching, He goes to Capernaum to work miracles there; as it is said, *When he had ended all his sayings, he entered into Capernaum.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 20.) Here we must understand that He did not enter before He had ended these sayings, but it is not mentioned what space of time intervened between the termination of His discourse, and His entering into Capernaum. For in that interval the leper was cleansed whom Matthew introduced in his proper place.

Ambrose. But having finished His teaching, He rightly instructs them to follow the example of His precepts. For straightway the servant of a Gentile centurion is presented to the Lord to be healed. Now the Evangelist, when he said that the servant was about to die, did not err, because he would have died had he not been healed by Christ.

Eusebius. Although that centurion was strong in battle, and the prefect of the Roman soldiers, yet because his particular attendant lay sick at his house, considering what wonderful things the Saviour had done in healing the sick, and judging that these miracles were performed by no human power, he sends to Him, as unto God, not looking to the visible instrument by which He had intercourse with men; as it follows, *And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him, &c.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) How then will that be true which Matthew relates, *A certain centurion came to him*, seeing that he himself did not come? unless upon careful consideration we suppose that Matthew made use of a general mode of expression. For if the actual arrival is frequently said to be through the means of others, much more may the coming be by others. Not then without reason, (the centurion having gained access to our Lord through others,) did Matthew, wishing to speak briefly, say that this man himself came to Christ, rather than those by whom he sent his message, for the more he believed the nearer he came.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 26. in Matt.) How again does Matthew tell us that the centurion said, *I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof*, while Luke says here, that he beseeches Him that He would come. Now it seems to me that Luke sets before us the flatteries of the Jews. For we may believe that when the centurion wished to depart, the Jews drew him back, enticing him, saying, *We will go and bring him.* Hence also their prayers are full of flattery, for it follows, *But when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying that he was worthy.* Although it became them to have said, He himself was willing to come and supplicate Thee, but we detained him, seeing the affliction, and the body which was lying in the house, and so to have drawn out the greatness of his faith; but they would not for envy reveal the faith of the man, lest He should seem some great one to whom the

prayers were addressed. But wherein Matthew represents the centurion to be not an Israelite, while Luke says, *he has built us a synagogue*, there is no contradiction, for he might not have been a Jew, and yet built a synagogue.

Bede. But herein they shew, that as by a church, so also by a synagogue, they were wont to mean not only the assembly of the faithful, but also the place where they assembled.

Eusebius. And the elders of the Jews indeed demand favours for a small sum spent in the service of the synagogue, but the Lord not for this, but a higher reason, manifested Himself, wishing in truth to beget a belief in all men by His own power, as it follows, *Then Jesus went with them.*

Ambrose. Which certainly He did not do, because He was unable to heal when absent, but that He might set them an example of imitating His humility. He would not go to the son of the nobleman, lest He should seem thereby to have respected his riches; He went immediately here, that He might not seem to have despised the low estate of a centurion's servant. But the centurion laying aside his military pride puts on humility, being both willing to believe and eager to honour; as it follows, *And when he was not far off, he sent unto him, saying, Trouble not, thyself: for I am not worthy*, &c. For by the power not of man, but of God, he supposed that health was given to man. The Jews indeed alleged his worthiness; but he confessed himself unworthy not only of the benefit, but even of receiving the Lord under his roof, *For I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) For as soon as he was freed from the annoyance of the Jews, he then sends, saying, Think not that it was from negligence I came not unto Thee, but I counted myself unworthy to receive Thee in my house.

Ambrose. But Luke well says, that friends were sent by the centurion to meet our Lord, lest by his own coming he might seem both to embarrass our Lord, and to have called for a requital of good offices. Hence it follows, *Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee, but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Here observe that the centurion held a right opinion concerning the Lord; he said not, pray, but, command; and in doubt lest He should from humility refuse him, he adds, *For I also am a man set under authority, &c.*

Bede. He says that he though a man subject to the power of the tribune or governor, yet has command over his inferiors, that it might be implied that much more is He who is God, able not only by the presence of His body, but by the services of His angels, to fulfil whatever He wishes. For the weakness of the flesh or the hostile powers were to be subdued both by the word of the Lord and the ministry of the angels. *And to my servant, Do this, &c.*

Chrysostom. (contra Anom. Hom. 17.) We must here remark, that this word, *Fac*, signifies a command given to a servant. So God when He wished to create man, said not to the Only-begotten, "Make man," but, *Let us make man*, that by the form of unity in the words he might make manifest the equality of the agents. Because then the centurion considered in Christ the greatness of His dominion, therefore saith He, *say in a word. For I also say to my servant*. But Christ blames him not, but confirmed his wishes, as it follows, *When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled.*

Bede. But who had wrought this very faith in him, save He who marvelled? But supposing another had done it, why should He marvel who foreknew it? Because then the Lord marvels, it signifies that we must marvel. For all such feelings when they are spoken of God, are the tokens not of a wonder-struck mind, but of a teaching master.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 27. in Matt.) But that you might see plainly that the Lord said this for the instruction of others, the Evangelist wisely explains it, adding, *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*.

Ambrose. And indeed if you read it thus, "In none in Israel have I found so great faith," the meaning is simple and easy. But if according to the Greek, "Not even in Israel have I found so great faith," faith of this kind is preferred even to that of the more elect, and those that see God.

Bede. But he speaks not of Patriarchs and Prophets in times far back, but of the men of the present age to whom the faith of the centurion is preferred, because they were instructed in the precepts of the Law and the Prophets, but he with no one to teach him of his own accord believed.

Ambrose. The faith of the master is proved, and the health of the servant established, as it follows, *And they that were sent returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick*. It is possible then that the good deed of a master may advantage his servants, not only through the merit of faith, but the practice of discipline.

Bede. Matthew explains these things more fully, saying, that when our Lord said to the centurion, *Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee, the servant was healed in the self-same hour*. But it is the manner of the blessed Luke, to abridge or even purposely to pass by whatever he sees plainly set forth by the other Evangelists, but what he knows to be omitted by them, or briefly touched upon, to more carefully explain.

Ambrose. Mystically, by the centurion's servant is signified that the Gentile people who were enthralled by the chain of worldly bondage, and diseased with deadly passions, are to be healed by the mercy of the Lord.

Bede. But the centurion, whose faith is preferred to Israel, represents the elect from the Gentiles, who as it were attended by their hundred soldiers, are exalted by their perfection of spiritual virtues. For the number hundred, which is transferred from the left to the right [a], is frequently put to signify the celestial life. These then must pray to the Lord for those who are still oppressed with fear, in the spirit of bondage. But we of the Gentiles who believe can not ourselves come to the Lord, whom we are unable to see in the flesh, but ought to approach by faith; we must send the elders of the Jews, that is, we must by our suppliant entreaties gain as patrons the greatest men of the Church, who have gone before us to the Lord, who bearing us witness that we have a care to build up the Church, may intercede for our sins. It is well said that Jesus was not far from the house, *for his salvation is nigh unto them that fear him*, and he who rightly uses the law of nature, in that he does the things which he knows to be good, approaches nigh unto Him who is good.

Ambrose. But the centurion wished not to trouble Jesus, for Whom the Jewish people crucified, the Gentiles desire to keep inviolate from injury, and (as touching a mystery) he saw that Christ was not yet able to pierce the hearts of the Gentiles.

Bede. The soldiers and servants who obey the centurion, are the natural virtues which many who come to the Lord will bring with them in great numbers.

Theophylact. Or in another way. The centurion must be understood as one who stood foremost among many in wickedness, as long as he possesses many things in this life, i. e. is occupied with many affairs or concerns. But he has a servant, the irrational part of the soul, that is, the irascible and concupiscent part. And he speaks to Jesus, the Jews acting as mediators, that is, the thoughts and words of confession, and immediately he received his servant whole.

11. And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her.

13. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not.

14. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.

15. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

16. And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17. And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judæa, and throughout all the region round about.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Lord joins one miracle upon another. In the Former instance He came indeed when called for, but in this He came self-invited; as it is said, *And it came to pass the day after that he went into a city called Nain.*

Bede. Nain is a city of Galilee, within two miles of mount Tabor. But by the divine counsel there were large multitudes accompanying the Lord, that there might be many witnesses of so great a miracle. Hence it follows, *And his disciples went with him, and much people.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (Tract. de Anima et Res. *Post med.*) Now the proof of the resurrection we learn not so much from the words as from the works of our Saviour, who, beginning His miracles with the less wonderful, reconciled our faith to far greater. First indeed in the grievous sickness of the centurion's servant, He verged upon the power of resurrection; afterwards with a higher power he led men to the belief in a resurrection, when He raised the widow's son, who was carried out to be buried; as it is said, *Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother.*

Titus Bostrensis. But some one will say of the centurion's servant, that he was not going to die. That such an one might restrain his rash tongue, the Evangelist explains that the young man whom Christ came upon was already dead, *the only son of a widow.* For it follows, *And she was a widow, and much people of the city was. with her.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (de hom. Opif. c. 25.) He has told us the sum of misery in a few words. The mother was a widow, and had no further hope of having children, she had no one upon whom she might look in the place of him that was dead. To him alone she had given suck, he alone made her home cheerful. All that is sweet and precious to a mother, was he alone to her.

Cyril of Alexandria. These were sufferings to excite compassion, and which might well affect to mourning and tears, as it follows, *And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, saying, Weep not.*

Bede. As if He said, Cease to weep for one as dead, whom you shall soon see rise again alive.

Chrysostom. (Tit. Bost.) But when He bids us cease from weeping Who consoles the sorrowful, He tells us to receive consolation from those who are now dead, hoping for their resurrection. But life meeting death stops the bier, as it follows, *And he came.*

Cyril of Alexandria. He performs the miracle not only in word, but also touches the bier, to the end that you might know that the sacred body of Christ is powerful to the saving of man. For it is the body of Life and the flesh of the Omnipotent Word, whose power it possesses. For as iron applied to fire does the work of fire, so the flesh, when it is united to the Word, which quickens all things, becomes itself also quickening, and the banisher of death.

Titus Bostrensis. (non occ.) But the Saviour is not like to Elias mourning over the son of the widow of Sarepta, (1 Kings 17) nor as Elisha who laid his own body upon the body of the dead, (2 Kings 4) nor as Peter who prayed for Tabitha, (Acts 9:40) but is none other than He who calls those things which be not, as though they were, who can speak to the dead as to the living, (Rom. 4:17) as it follows, *And he said, Young man*

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) When He said, *Young man*, He signified that he was in the flower of his age, just ripening into manhood, who but a little while before was the sight of his mother's eyes, just entering upon the time of marriage, the scion of her race, the branch of succession, the staff of her old age.

Titus Bostrensis. But straightway he arose to whom the command was made. For the Divine power is irresistible; there is no delay, no urgency of prayer, as it follows, *And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak, and he gave him to his mother.* These are the signs. of a true resurrection, for the lifeless body cannot speak, nor would the mother have carried back to her house her dead and lifeless son.

Bede. But well does the Evangelist testify that the Lord is first moved with compassion for the mother, and then raises her son, that in the one case He might set before us for our imitation an example of piety, in the other He might build up our belief in His wonderful power. Hence it follows. *And there came a fear upon all, and they glorified God, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. This was a great thing in an insensible and ungrateful people. For in a short time afterward they would neither esteem Him as a prophet, nor allow that He did aught for the public good. But none of those that dwelt in Judæa were ignorant of this miracle, as it follows, *And this rumour of him went forth throughout all Judæa.*

Maximus. (non occ.) But it is worthy of remark, that seven resurrections are related before our Lord's, of which the first was that of the son of the widow of Sarepta, (1 Kings 17) the second of the Shunamite's son, (2 Kings 4) the third which was caused by the remains of Elisha, (2 Kings 13) the fourth which took place at Nain, as is here related, the fifth of the ruler of the Synagogue's daughter, (Mark 5) the sixth of Lazarus, (John 11) the seventh at Christ's passion, for many bodies of the saints arose. (Mat. 27.) The eighth is that of Christ, who being free from death remained beyond for a sign that the general resurrection which is to come in the eighth age shall not be dissolved by death, but shall abide never to pass away.

Bede. But the dead man who was carried without the gate of the city in the sight of many, signifies a man rendered senseless by the deadening power

of mortal sin, and no longer concealing his soul's death within the folds of his heart, but proclaiming it to the knowledge of the world, through the evidence of words or deeds as through the gate of the city. For the gate of the city, I suppose, is some one of the bodily senses. And he is well said to be the only son of his mother, for there is one mother composed of many individuals, the Church, but every soul that remembers that it is redeemed by the death of the Lord, knows the Church to be a widow.

Ambrose. For this widow surrounded by a great multitude of people seems to be more than the woman who was thought worthy by her tears to obtain the resurrection of her only son, because the Church recalls the younger people from the funeral procession to life by the contemplation of her tears, who is forbid to weep for him to whom resurrection was promised.

Bede. Or the dogma of Novatus is crushed [b], who endeavouring to do away with the purifying of the penitent, denies that the mother Church, weeping for the spiritual extinction of her sons, ought to be consoled by the hope of their restoration to life.

Ambrose. This dead man was borne on the bier by the four material elements to the grave, but there was a hope of his rising again because he was borne on wood, which though before it did not benefit us, yet after Christ had touched it, began to profit unto life, that it might be a sign that salvation was to be extended to the people by the wood of the cross. For we lie lifeless on the bier when either the fire of immoderate desire bursts forth, or the cold moisture breaks out, and through the sluggish state of our earthly body the vigour of our minds waxes dull.

Bede. Or the coffin on which the dead is carried is the ill at ease conscience of a desperate sinner. But they who carry him to be buried are either unclean desires, or the allurements of companions, who stood when our Lord touched the bier, because the conscience, when touched by dread of the judgment from on high, often checking its carnal lusts, and those who unjustly praise, returns to itself, and answers its Saviour's call to life.

Ambrose. If then thy sin is so heavy that by thy penitential tears thou canst not thyself wash it out, let the mother Church weep for thee, the multitude standing by; soon shalt thou rise from the dead and begin to speak the words of life; they all shall fear, (for by the example of one all are corrected;) they shall also praise God who has given us such great remedies for escaping death.

Bede. But God has visited His people not only by the one incarnation of His Word, but by ever sending It into our hearts.

Theophylact. By the widow also you may understand a soul that has lost her husband in the divine word. Her son is the understanding, which is carried out beyond the city of the living. Its coffin is the body, which some indeed have called the tomb. But the Lord touching him raises him up, causing him to become young, and rising from sin he begins to speak and teach others. For before he would not have been believed.

7:18–23

18. And the disciples of John shewed him of all these things.

19. And John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

20. When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?

21. And in the same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

22. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.

23. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

Cyril of Alexandria. Certain of His disciples relate to the holy Baptist the miracle which was known to all the inhabitants of Judæa and Galilee, as it follows, *And they told John, &c.*

Bede. Not, as it seems to me, in simpleness of heart, but provoked by envy. For in another place also they complain, *Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come unto him.* (John 3:26.)

Chrysostom. But we are then most raised up to Him when we are fallen into straits. John therefore, being cast into prison, takes the opportunity, when his disciples were most in need of Jesus, to send them to Christ. For it follows, *And John calling two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come, &c.*

Bede. He says not, Art thou He that hast come, but, *Art thou he that should come.* The sense is, Tell me who am to be slain by Herod, and about to descend into hell, (ad inferna) whether I should announce Thee to the souls below as I have announced Thee to those above? or is this not befitting the Son of God, and Thou art going to send another for these sacraments?

Cyril of Alexandria. But we must altogether disallow such an opinion. For no where do we find the Holy Scriptures stating that John the Baptist foretold to those souls in hell the coming of our Saviour. It is also true to say, that the Baptist was not ignorant of the wonderful mystery of the incarnation of the Only-Begotten, and so also along with the other things had known this, that our Lord was about to preach the Gospel to those who were in hell, after He had tasted death for all living as well as dead. But since the word of holy Scripture indeed declared that Christ would come as the Lord and Chief, but the others were sent as servants before Him, therefore was the Lord and Saviour of all called by the prophets, He who cometh, or Who is to come; according to that, *Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord*; (Ps. 118:26.) and, *A little while, and he who is to come shall come, and will not tarry.* (Hab. 2:3.) The blessed Baptist therefore, receiving as it were this name from Holy Scripture, sent certain of his disciples to seek whether it was indeed *He who cometh*, or, *Who is to come.*

Ambrose. But how could it come to pass, that Him of whom he said, *Behold him who taketh away the sins of the world*, he should still not believe to be the Son of God? For either it is presumption to attribute to Christ a divine action ignorantly, or it is unbelief to have doubted concerning the Son of God. But some suppose of John himself that he was indeed so great a prophet as to acknowledge Christ, but still as not a doubting, but pious, prophet disbelieved that He would die, whom he believed was about to come. Not therefore in his faith but in his piety, he doubted; as Peter also, when he said, *Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.* (Mat 16:22.)

Cyril of Alexandria. (Thes. lib. 11. c. 4.) Or he asks the question by economy. For as the forerunner he knew the mystery of Christ's passion, but that his disciples might be convinced how great was the excellence of the Saviour, he sent the more understanding of them, instructing them to enquire and learn from the very words of the Saviour, whether it was He who was expected; as it is added, *But when the men were come unto him, they said, John the Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou He, &c.* But He knowing as God with what intention John had sent them, and the cause of their coming, was at the time performing many miracles, as it follows, *And in the same hour he healed many of their infirmities, &c.* He said not positively to them *I am he*, but rather leads them to the certainty of the fact, in order that receiving their faith in Him, with their reason agreeing thereto, they might return to him who sent them. Hence He made not answer to the words, but to the intention of him who sent them; as it follows, *And Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things you have seen and heard*: as if He said, Go and tell John the things which ye have heard indeed through the Prophets, but have seen accomplished by Me. For He was then performing those things which the Prophets prophesied He would do; that is of which it is added, *For the blind see, the lame walk.*

Ambrose. An ample testimony surely by which the Prophet might recognise the Lord. For of the, Lord Himself it was prophesied, that *the Lord giveth food to the hungry, raiseth up them that are bowed down, looseth the prisoners, openeth the eyes of the blind, and that he who doeth these things shall reign for ever.* (Ps. 146:7–10.) Such then are not the tokens of human, but divine power. But these are found seldom or not at all before the Gospel. Tobias alone received sight, and this was the cure of an Angel, not of a man. (Tob. 11.) Elias raised the dead, but he prayed and wept, our Lord commanded. (1 Kings 17) Elisha caused the cleansing of a leper: yet then the cause was not so much in the authority of the command as in the figure of the mystery. (2 Kings 5.)

Theophylact. These are also the words of Elias, saying, *The Lord himself shall come and save us. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart.* (Isa. 35:4–6.)

Bede. And what is not less than these, *the poor have the Gospel preached to them*, that is, the poor are enlightened by the Spirit, or hidden treasures, that there might be no difference between the rich and the poor. These things prove the faith of the Master, when all who can be saved by Him are equal.

Ambrose. But still these are but slight examples of the testimony to the Lord. The full assurance of faith is the cross of the Lord, His death and burial. Hence He adds, *And blessed is he who shall not be offended in me.* For the cross may cause offence, even to the elect. But there is no greater testimony than this of a divine person. For there is nothing which seems to be more surpassing the nature of man than that one should offer Himself for the whole world.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else, He wished by this to shew that whatever was passing in their hearts, could not be hid from His sight. For they were those who were offended at Him.

Ambrose. But we have before said, that mystically John was the type of the Law, which was the forerunner of Christ. John then sends his disciples to Christ, that they might obtain the filling up of their knowledge, for Christ is the fulfilling of the Law. And perhaps those disciples are the two nations, of whom the one of the Jews believed, the other of the Gentiles believed because they heard. They wished then to see, because *blessed are the eyes that see.* But when they shall have come to the Gospel, and found that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, then shall they say, "We have seen with our eyes," for we seem to ourselves to see Him whom we read of. Or perhaps through the instrumentality (operatrice) of a certain part of our Body [a] we all seem to have traced out the course of our Lord's passion; for faith comes through the few to the many. The Law then announces that Christ will come, the writings of the Gospel prove that He has come.

24. And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

25. But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts.

26. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet.

27. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

28. For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) The Lord, knowing the secrets of men, foresaw that some would say, If until now John is ignorant of Jesus, how did he shew Him to us, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world?* To quench therefore this feeling which had taken possession of them, He prevented the injury which might arise from the offence, as it follows, *And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, what went ye out for to see? A reed shaken in the wind?* As if He said, Ye marvelled at John the Baptist, and oftentimes came to see him, passing over long journeys in the desert; surely in vain, if you think him so fickle as to be like a reed bending down whichever way the wind moves it. For such he appeal's to be, who lightly avows his ignorance of the things which he knows.

Titus Bostrensis. (non occ.) But you went not out into the desert, (where there is no pleasantness,) leaving your cities, except as caring for this man.

Greek Expositor. (Simeon) Now these things were spoken by our Lord after the departure of John's disciples, for He would not utter the praises of the Baptist while they were present, lest His words should be counted as those of a flatterer.

Ambrose. Not unmeaningly then is the character of John praised there, who preferred the way of righteousness to the love of life, and swerved not through fear of death. For this world seems to be compared to a desert, into which, as yet barren and uncultivated, the Lord says we must not so enter as to regard men puffed up with a fleshly mind, and devoid of inward virtue, and vaunting themselves in the heights of frail worldly glory, as a kind of example and model for our imitation. And such being exposed to the storms of this world, and tossed to and fro by a restless life, are rightly compared to a reed.

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) We have also an infallible testimony to John's way of life in his manner of clothing, and his imprisonment, into which he never would have been cast had he known how to court princes; as it follows, *But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed with soft raiment? Behold they who are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' houses*. By being clothed with soft raiment, he signifies men who live luxuriously.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 29. in ep. ad Heb.) But a soft garment relaxes the austerity of the soul; and if worn by a hard and rigorous body, soon, by such effeminacy, makes it frail and delicate. But when the body becomes softer, the soul must also share the injury; for generally its workings correspond with the conditions of the body.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) How then could a religious strictness, so great that it subdued to itself all fleshly lusts, sink down to such ignorance, except from a frivolity of mind, which is not fostered by austerities, but by worldly delights. If then ye imitate John, as one who cared not for pleasure, award him also the strength of mind, which befits his continence. But if strictness no more tends to this than a life of luxury, why do you, not respecting those who live delicately, admire the inhabitant of the desert, and his wretched garment of camel's hair.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 37. in Matt.) By each of these sayings He shews John to be neither naturally nor easily shaken or diverted from any purpose.

Ambrose. And although very many become effeminate by the use of softer garments, yet here other garments seem to be meant, namely, our mortal bodies, by which our souls are clothed. Again, luxurious acts and habits are soft garments, but those whose languid limbs are wasted away in luxuries are shut out of the kingdom of heaven, whom the rulers of this world and of darkness have taken captive. For these are the kings who exercise tyranny over those who are their fellows in their own works.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) But perhaps it does not concern us to excuse John upon this ground, for you confess that he is worthy of imitation, hence He adds, *But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Verily I say unto you, more than a prophet*. For the prophets foretold that Christ would come, but John not only foretold that He would come, but also declared Him to be present, saying, *Behold the Lamb of God*.

Ambrose. Indeed, greater than a prophet (or more than a prophet) was he in whom the prophets terminate; for many desired to see Him whom he saw, whom he baptized.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) Having then described his character by the place where he dwelt, by his clothing, and from the crowds who went to see him, He introduces the testimony of the prophet, saying, *This is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my angel*. (Mal. 3:1.)

Titus Bostrensis. He calls a man an angel, not because he was by nature an angel, for he was by nature a man, but because he exercised the office of an angel, in heralding the advent of Christ.

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) But by the words which follow, *Before thy face*, he signifies nearness of time, for John appeared to men close to the coming of Christ. Wherefore must he indeed be considered more than a prophet, for those also who in battle fight close to the sides of kings, are their most distinguished and greatest friends.

Ambrose. But he prepared the way of the Lord not only in the order of birth according to the flesh, and as the messenger of faith, but also as the forerunner of His glorious passion. Hence it follows, *Who shall prepare thy way before thee*.

Ambrose. But if Christ also is a prophet, how is this man greater than all. But it is said, among those born of woman, not of a virgin. For He was greater

than those, whose equal he might be in way of birth, as it follows, *For I say unto you, of those that are born of woman, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) The voice of the Lord is indeed sufficient to bear testimony to John's pre-eminence among men. But any one will find the real facts of the case confirming the same, by considering his food, his manner of life, the loftiness of his mind. For he dwelt on earth as one who had come down from heaven, casting no care upon his body, his mind raised up to heaven, and united to God alone, taking no thought for worldly things; his conversation grave and gentle, for with the Jewish people he dealt honestly and zealously, with the king boldly, with his own disciples mildly. He did nothing idle or trifling, but all things becomingly.

Isidore of Peleusium. (lib. 1. Ep. 33.) John was also greatest among those that are born of women, because he prophesied from the very womb of his mother, and though in darkness, was not ignorant of the light which had already come.

Ambrose. Lastly, so impossible is it that there should be any comparison between John and the Son of God, that he is counted even below the angels; as it follows, *But he that is least in the kingdom of God, is greater than he.*

Bede. These words may be understood in two ways. For either he called that the kingdom of God, which we have not yet received, (in which are the Angels,) and the very least among them is greater than any righteous man, who bears about a body, which weighs down the soul. Or if by the kingdom of God be meant to be understood the Church of this time, the Lord referred to Himself, who in the time of His birth came after John, but was greater in divine authority, and the power of the Lord. Moreover, according to the first explanation, the distinction is as follows, *But he who is least in the kingdom of God*, and then it is added, *is greater than he*. According to the latter, *But he who is least*, and then added, *is greater in the kingdom of God than he.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) For He adds this, that the abundant praise of John might not give the Jews a pretext to prefer John to Christ. But do not suppose that he spoke comparatively of His being greater than John.

Ambrose. For He is of another nature, which bears not comparison with human kind. For there can be no comparing of God with men.

Cyril of Alexandria. But in a mystery, when shewing the superiority of John among those that are born of women, he places in opposition something greater, namely, Himself who was born by the holy Spirit the Son of God. For the kingdom of the Lord is the Spirit of God. Although then as respects works and holiness, we may be inferior to those who attained unto the mystery of the law, whom John represents, yet through Christ we have greater things, being made partakers of the Divine nature.

7:29–35

29. And all the people that heard him, and the Publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30. But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

31. And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?

32. They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.

33. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.

34. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of Publicans and sinners!

35. But wisdom is justified of all her children.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 37. in Matt.) Having declared the praises of John, he next exposes the great fault of the Pharisees and lawyers, who would not after the publicans receive the baptism of John. Hence it is said, *And all the people that heard him, and the Publicans, justified God.*

Ambrose. God is justified by baptism, wherein men justify themselves confessing their sins. For he that sins and confesses his sin unto God, justifies God, submitting himself to Him who overcometh, and hoping for grace from Him; God therefore is justified by baptism, in which there is confession and pardon of sin.

Eusebius. Because also they believed, they justified God, for He appeared just to them in all that He did. But the disobedient conduct of the Pharisees in not receiving John, accorded not with the words of the prophet, *That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest.* (Ps. 51:4.) Hence it follows, *But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God, &c.*

Bede. These words were spoken either in the person of the Evangelist, or, as some think, of the Saviour; but when he says, *against themselves*, he means that he who rejects the grace of God, does it against himself. Or, they are blamed as foolish and ungrateful for being unwilling to receive the counsel of God, sent *to* themselves. The counsel then is of God, because He ordained salvation by the passion and death of Christ, which the Pharisees and lawyers despised.

Ambrose. Let us not then despise (as the Pharisees did) the counsel of God, which is in the baptism of John, that is, the counsel which the Angel of great counsel searches out. (Is. 9:6. LXX.) No one despises the counsel of man. Who then shall reject the counsel of God?

Cyril of Alexandria. There was a certain play among the Jewish children of this kind. A company of boys were collected together, who, mocking the sudden changes in the affairs of this life, some of them sang, some mourned, but the mourners did not rejoice with those that rejoiced, nor did those who rejoiced fall in with those that wept. They then rebuked each other in turn with the charge of want of sympathy. That such were the feelings of the Jewish people and their rulers, Christ implied in the following words, spoken in the person of Christ; *Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like to children sitting in the market-place.*

Bede. The Jewish generation is compared to children, because formerly they had prophets for their teachers, of whom it is said, *Out of the mouths of*

babes and sucklings hast thou perfected praise.

Ambrose. But the prophets sung, repeating in spiritual strains their oracles of the common salvation; they wept, soothing with mournful dirges the hard hearts of the Jews. The songs were not sung in the market-place, nor in the streets, but in Jerusalem. For that is the Lord's forum, in which the laws of His heavenly precepts are framed.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Hom. 6. in Eccl.) But singing and lamentation are nothing else but the breaking forth, the one indeed of joy, the other of sorrow. Now at the sound of a tune played upon a musical instrument, man by the concordant beating of his feet, and motion of his body, pourtrays his inward feelings. Hence he says, *We have sung, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.*

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 11.) Now these words have reference to John and Christ. For when he says, *We have mourned, and ye have not wept*, it is in allusion to John, whose abstinence from meat and drink signified penitential sorrow; and hence he adds in explanation, *For John came neither eating bread, nor drinking wine, and ye say he hath a devil.*

Cyril of Alexandria. They take upon themselves to slander a man worthy of all admiration. They say that he who mortifies the law of sin which is in his members hath a devil.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But his words, *We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced*, refer to the Lord Himself, who by using meats and drinks as others did, represented the joy of His kingdom. Hence it follows, *The Son of man came eating and drinking*, &c.

Titus Bostrensis. For Christ would not abstain from this food, lest He should give a handle to heretics, who say that the creatures of God are bad, and blame flesh and wine.

Cyril of Alexandria. But where could they point out the Lord as gluttonous? For Christ is found every where repressing excess, and leading men to temperance. But He associated with publicans and sinners. Hence they said against Him, *He is a friend of Publicans and sinners*, though He could in no wise fall into sin, but on the contrary was to them the cause of salvation. For the sun is not polluted though sending its rays over all the earth, and frequently falling upon unclean bodies. Neither will the Sun of righteousness be hurt by associating with the bad. But let no one attempt to place his own condition on a level with Christ's greatness, but let each considering his own infirmity avoid having dealing with such men, for "evil communications corrupt good manners." It follows, *And wisdom is justified of all her children.*

Ambrose. The Son of God is wisdom, by nature, not by growth, which is justified by baptism, when it is not rejected through obstinacy, but through righteousness is acknowledged the gift of God. Herein then is the justification of God, if he seems to transfer His gifts not to the unworthy and guilty, but to those who are through baptism holy and just.

Chrysostom. (Hom. in Ps. 108.) But by the children of wisdom, He means the wise. For Scripture is accustomed to indicate the bad rather by their sin than their name, but to call the good the children of the virtue which characterizes them.

Ambrose. He well says, *of all*, for justice is reserved for all, that the faithful may be taken up, the unbelievers cast out.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or, when he says, *wisdom is justified of all her children*, he shews that the children of wisdom understand that righteousness consists neither in abstaining from nor eating food, but in patiently enduring want. For not the use of such things, but the coveting after them, must be blamed; only let a man adapt himself to the kind of food of those with whom he lives.

7:36–50

36. And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37. And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

38. And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

40. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on.

41. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.

42. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

43. Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.

44. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

45. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

48. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also?

50. And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace.

Bede. Having said just before, *And the people that heard him justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John*, the same Evangelist builds up in deed what he had proposed in word, namely, wisdom justified by the righteous and the penitent, saying, *And one of the Pharisees desired him*, &c.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Hom. de Mul. Peccat.) This account is full of precious instruction. For there are very many who justify themselves, being puffed up with the dreamings of an idle fancy, who before the time of judgment comes, separate themselves as lambs from the herds, not willing even to join in eating with the many, and hardly with those who go not to extremes, but keep the middle path in life. St. Luke, the physician of souls rather than of bodies, represents therefore our Lord and Saviour most mercifully visiting others, as it follows, *And he went into the Pharisees' house, and sat down to meat*. Not that He should share any of his faults, but might impart somewhat of His own righteousness.

Cyril of Alexandria. A woman of corrupt life, but testifying her faithful affection, comes to Christ, as having power to release her from every fault, and to grant her pardon for the crimes she had committed. For it follows, *And behold a woman in the city, which was a sinner, brought an alabaster box of ointment*.

Bede. Alabaster is a kind of white marble tinged with various colours, which is generally used for vessels holding ointment, because it is said to be the best sort for preserving the ointment sweet.

Gregory. (in Hom. 33. in Ev.) For this woman, beholding the spots of her shame, ran to wash them at the fountain of mercy, and blushed not at seeing the guests, for since she was courageously ashamed of herself within, she thought there was nothing which could shame her from without. Observe with what sorrow she is wrung who is not ashamed to weep even in the midst of a feast!

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) But to mark her own unworthiness, she stands behind with downcast eyes, and with her hair thrown about embraces His feet, and washing them with her tears, betokened a mind distressed at her state, and imploring pardon. For it follows, *And standing behind, she began to wash his feet with her tears*.

Gregory. (in Hom. 33. in Evang.) For her eyes which once coveted after earthly things, she was now wearing out with penitential weeping. She once displayed her hair for the setting off of her face, she now wiped her tears with her hair. As it follows, *And she wiped them with the hairs of her head*. She once uttered proud things with her mouth, but kissing the feet of the Lord, she impressed her lips on the footsteps of her Redeemer. She once used ointment for the perfume of her body; what she had unworthily applied to herself, she now laudably offered to God. As it follows, *And she anointed with ointment*. As many enjoyments as she had in herself, so many offerings did she devise out of herself. She converts the number of her faults into the same number of virtues, that as much of her might wholly serve God in her penitence, as had despised God in her sin.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 6. in Matt.) Thus the harlot became then more honourable than the virgins. For no sooner was she inflamed with penitence, than she burst forth in love for Christ. And these things indeed which have been spoken of were done outwardly, but those which her mind pondered within itself, were much more fervent. God alone beheld them.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But the Pharisee beholding these things despises them, and finds fault, not only with the woman who was a sinner, but with the Lord who received her, as it follows, *Now when the Pharisee who had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him*. We see the Pharisee really proud in himself, and hypocritically righteous, blaming the sick woman for her sickness, the physician for his aid. The woman surely if she had come to the feet of the Pharisee would have departed with the heel lifted up against her. For he would have thought that he was polluted by another's sin, not having sufficient of his own real righteousness to fill him. So also some gifted with the priests' office, if perchance they have done any just thing outwardly or slightly, forthwith despise those who are put under them, and look with disdain on sinners who are of the people. But when we behold sinners, we must first bewail ourselves for their calamity, since we perhaps have had and are certainly liable to a similar fall. But it is necessary that we should carefully distinguish, for we are bound to make distinction in vices, but to have compassion on nature. For if we must punish the sinner, we must cherish a brother. But when by penance he has himself punished his own deed, our brother is no more a sinner, for he punished in himself what Divine justice condemned. The Physician was between two sick persons, but the one preserved her faculties in the fever, the other lost his mental perception. For she wept at what she had done; but the Pharisee, elated with a false sense of righteousness, overrated the vigour of his own health.

Titus Bostrensis. But the Lord not hearing his words, but perceiving his thoughts, shewed Himself to be the Lord of Prophets, as it follows, *And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have something to say unto thee.*

Gloss. (non occ. v. Lyra in loc.) And this indeed He spake in answer to his thoughts; and the Pharisee was made more attentive by these words of our Lord, as it is said, *And he saith, Master, say on.*

Gregory. (ubi sup.) A parable concerning two debtors is opposed to him, of whom the one owed more, the other less; as it follows, *There was a certain creditor which had two debtors*, &c.

Titus Bostrensis. As if He said, Nor art thou without debts. What then! If thou art involved in fewer debts, boast not thyself, for thou art still in need of pardon. Then He goes on to speak of pardon, *And when they had nothing to pay, he freely forgave them both.*

Gloss. (non occ.) For no one can of himself escape the debt of sin, but only by obtaining pardon through the grace of God.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But both debtors being forgiven, the Pharisee is asked which most loved the forgiver of the debts. For it follows, *Who then will love him most?* To which he at once answers, *I suppose, that he to whom he forgave most*. And here we must remark, that while the Pharisee is convicted upon his own grounds, the madman carries the rope by which he will be bound; as it follows, *But he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged*. The good deeds of the sinful woman are enumerated to him, and the evils of the pretended righteous; as it follows, *And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with her tears.*

Titus Bostrensis. As if He said, To provide water is easy, to pour forth tears is not easy. Thou hast not provided even what was at hand, she hath poured forth what was not at hand; for washing my feet with her tears, she washed away her own stains. She wiped them with her hair, that so she might draw to herself the sacred moisture, and by that by which she once enticed youth to sin, might now attract to herself holiness.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 6. in Matt.) But as after the breaking of a violent storm there comes a calm, so when tears have burst forth, there is peace, and gloomy thoughts vanish; and as by water and the Spirit, so by tears and confession we are again made clean. Hence it follows, *Wherefore I say unto you, Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loveth much.* For those who have violently plunged into evil, will in time also eagerly follow after good, being conscious to what debts they have made themselves responsible.

Gregory. (Hom. 33. in Evan.) The more then the heart of the sinner is burnt up by the great fire of charity, so much the more is the rust of sin consumed.

Titus Bostrensis. But it more frequently happens that he who has sinned much is purified by confession, but he who has sinned little, refuses from pride to come to be healed thereby. Hence it follows, *But to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 67. in Matt.) We have need then of a fervent spirit, for nothing hinders a man from becoming great. Let then no sinner despair, no virtuous man fall asleep; neither let the one be self-confident, for often the harlot shall go before him, nor the other distrustful, for he may even surpass the foremost. Hence it is also here added, *But he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee.*

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Behold she who had come sick to the Physician was healed, but because of her safety others are still sick; for it follows, *And they that sat at meat began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also.* But the heavenly Physician regards not those sick, whom He sees to be made still worse by His remedy, but her whom He had healed He encourages by making mention of her own piety; as it follows, *But he said unto the woman, Thy faith hath made thee whole*; for in truth she doubted not that she would receive what she sought for.

Theophylact. But after having forgiven her sins, He stops not at the forgiveness of sins, but adds good works, as it follows, *Go in peace*, i. e. in righteousness, for righteousness is the reconciliation of man to God, as sin is the enmity between God and man; as if He said, Do all things which lead you to the peace of God.

Ambrose. Now in this place many seem to be perplexed with the question, whether the Evangelists do not appear to have differed concerning the faith.

Greek Expositor. (Severus Antiochenus.) For since the four Evangelists relate that Christ was anointed with ointment by a woman, I think that there were three women, differing according to the quality of each, their mode of action, and the difference of times. John, for example, relates that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, six days before the Passover, anointed the feet of Jesus in her own house; but Matthew, after that the Lord had said, *You know that after two days will be the Passover*, adds, that in Bethany, at the house of Simon the leper, a woman poured ointment upon the head of our Lord, but did not anoint His feet as Mary. Mark also says the same as Matthew; but Luke gives the account not near the time of the Passover, but in the middle of the Gospel. Chrysostom explains it that there were two different women, one indeed who is described in John, another who is mentioned by the three.

Ambrose. Matthew has introduced this woman as pouring ointment upon the head of Christ, and was therefore unwilling to call her a sinner, for the sinner, according to Luke, poured ointment upon the feet of Christ. She cannot then be the same, lest the Evangelists should seem to be at variance with one another. The difficulty may be also solved by the difference of merit and of time, so that the former woman may have been yet a sinner, the latter now more perfect.

Augustine. (de Cons. Ev. lib. ii. c. 79.) For I think we must understand that the same Mary did this twice, once indeed as Luke has related, when at first coming with humility and weeping, she was thought worthy to receive forgiveness of sins. Hence John, when he began to speak of the resurrection of Lazarus, before he came to Bethany, says, *But it was Mary who anointed our Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.* (John 11:2.) Mary therefore had already done this; but what she again did in Bethany is another occurrence, which belongs not to the relation of Luke, but is equally told by the other three.

Gregory. (in Hom. 33. in Evang.) Now in a mystical sense the Pharisee, presuming upon his pretended righteousness, is the Jewish people; the woman who was a sinner, but who came and wept at our Lord's feet, represents the conversion of the Gentiles.

Ambrose. Or, the leper, is the prince of this world; the house of Simon the leper, is the earth. The Lord therefore descended from the higher parts to this earth; for this woman could not have been healed, who bears the figure of a soul or the Church, had not Christ come upon earth. But rightly does she receive the figure of a sinner, for Christ also took the form of a sinner. If then thou makest thy soul approach in faith to God, it not with foul and shameful sins, but piously obeying the word of God, and in the confidence of unspotted purity, ascends to the very head of Christ. But the head of Christ is God. (1 Cor. 11:3.) But let him who holds not the head of Christ, hold the feet, the sinner at the feet, the just at the head; nevertheless she also who sinned, has ointment.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) What else is expressed by the ointment, but the sweet savour of a good report? If then we do good works by which we may sprinkle the Church with the sweet odour of a good report, what else do we but pour ointment upon the body of our Lord? But the woman stood by His feet, for we stood over against the feet of the Lord, when yet in our sins we resisted His ways. But if we are converted from our sins to true repentance, we now again stand by His feet, for we follow His footsteps whom we before opposed.

Ambrose. Bring thou also repentance after sin. Wherever thou hearest the name of Christ, speed thither; into whatever house thou knowest that Jesus has entered, thither hasten; when thou findest wisdom, when thou findest justice sitting in any inner chamber, run to its feet, that is, seek even the lowest part of wisdom; confess thy sins with tears. Perhaps Christ washed not His own feet, that we might wash them with our tears. Blessed tears, which can not only wash away our own sin, but also water the footsteps of the heavenly Word, that His goings may abound in us. Blessed tears, in which there is not only the redemption of sinners, but the refreshing of the righteous.

Gregory. (Hom. 33. in Evan.) For we water the feet of our Lord with tears if we are moved with compassion to any even the lowest members of our Lord. We wipe our Lord's feet with our hair, when we shew pity to His saints (with whom we suffer in love) by the sacrifice of those things with which we abound.

Ambrose. Throw about thy hair, scatter before Him all the graces of thy body. The hair is not to be despised which can wash the feet of Christ.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) The woman kisses the feet which she has wiped. This also we fully do when we ardently love those whom we maintain by our bounty. By the feet also may be understood the mystery itself of the Incarnation. We then kiss the feet of the Redeemer when we love with our whole heart the mystery of the Incarnation. We anoint the feet with ointment, when we proclaim the power of His humanity with the good tidings of holy eloquence. But this also the Pharisee sees and grudges, for when the Jewish people perceives that the Gentiles preach God, it consumes away by its own malice. But the Pharisee is thus repulsed, that as it were through Him that false people might be made manifest, for in truth that unbelieving people never

offered to the Lord even those things which were without them; but the Gentiles being converted, poured forth not only their substance but their blood. Hence He says to the Pharisee, *Thou gavest me no water for my feet, but she hath washed my feet with her tears*; for water is without us, the moisture of tears is within us. That unfaithful people also gave no kiss to the Lord, for it was unwilling to embrace Him from love whom it obeyed from fear, (for the kiss is the sign of love,) but the Gentiles being called cease not to kiss the feet of their Redeemer, for they ever breathe in His love.

Ambrose. But she is of no slight merit of whom it is said, *From the time that she entered has not ceased to kiss my feet*, so that she knew not to speak aught but wisdom, to love aught but justice, to touch aught but chastity, to kiss aught but modesty.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But it is said to the Pharisee, *My head with oil thou didst not anoint*, for the very power even of Divinity on which the Jewish people professed to believe, he neglects to celebrate with due praise. But she hath anointed my feet with ointment. For while the Gentile people believed the mystery of His incarnation, it proclaimed also His lowest powers with the highest praise.

Ambrose. Blessed is he even who can anoint with oil the feet of Christ, but more blessed is he who anoints with ointment, for the essence of many flowers blended into one, scatters the sweets of various odours. And perhaps no other than the Church alone can bring that ointment which has innumerable flowers of different perfumes, and therefore no one can love so much as she who loves in many individuals. But in the Pharisee's house, that is, in the house of the Law and the Prophets, not the Pharisee, but the Church is justified. For the Pharisee believed not, the Church believed. The Law has no mystery by which secret faults are cleansed, and therefore that which is wanting in the Law is made up in the Gospel. But the two debtors are the two nations who are responsible for payment to the usurer of the heavenly treasury. But we do not owe to this usurer material money, but the balance of our good deeds, the coin of our virtues, the merits of which are estimated by the weight of sorrow, the stamp of righteousness, the sound of confession. But that denarius is of no slight value on which the image of the king is found. Woe to me if I shall not have what I received. Or because there is hardly any one who can pay the whole debt to the usurer, woe to me if I shall not seek the debt to be forgiven me. But what nation is it that owes most, if not we to whom most is lent? To them were entrusted the oracles of God, to us is entrusted the Virgin's offspring, Immanuel, i. e. God with us, the cross of our Lord, His death, His resurrection. It cannot then be doubted that he owes most who receives most. Among men he perhaps offends most who is most in debt. By the mercy of the Lord the case is reversed, so that he loves most who owes most, if so be that he obtains grace. And therefore since there is nothing which we can worthily return to the Lord, woe be to me also if I shall not have loved. Let us then offer our love for the debt, for he loves most to whom most is given.

CHAP. 8

8:1–3

1. And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

2. And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,

3. And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

Theophylact. He who descended from heaven, for our example and imitation, gives us a lesson not to be slothful in teaching. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass afterward that he went*, &c.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. xxxvii. 2.) For He passes from place to place, that He may not only gain many, but may consecrate many places. He sleeps and labours, that He may sanctify sleep and labour. He weeps, that He may give a value to tears. He preaches heavenly things, that He may exalt His hearers.

Titus Bostrensis. For He who descends from heaven to earth, brings tidings to them that dwell on earth of a heavenly kingdom. But who ought to preach the kingdom of heaven? Many prophets came, yet preached not the kingdom of heaven, for how could they pretend to speak of things which they perceived not?

Isidore of Peleusium. (lib. iii. ep. 206.) Now this kingdom of God some think to be higher and better than the heavenly kingdom, but some think it to be one and the same in reality, but called by different names; at one time the kingdom of God from Him who reigneth, but at another the kingdom of heaven from the Angels and Saints, His subjects, who are said to be of heaven.

Bede. But like the eagle, enticing its young ones to fly, our Lord, step by step, raises up His disciples to heavenly things. He first of all teaches in the synagogues, and performs miracles. He next chooses twelve whom He names Apostles; He afterwards takes them alone with Him, as He preached throughout the cities and villages, as it follows, *And the twelve were with him.*

Theophylact. Not teaching or preaching, but to be instructed by Him. But lest it should seem that the women were hindered from following Christ, it is added, *And certain women which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils.*

Bede. Mary Magdalene is the same of whose repentance, without mention of her name, we have just read. For the Evangelist, when he relates her going with our Lord, rightly distinguishes her by her known name, but when describing the sinner but penitent, He speaks of her generally as a woman; lest the mark of her former guilt should blacken a name of so great report. Out of whom seven devils are reported to have gone, that it might be shewn that she was full of all vices.

Gregory. (Hom. 33. in Ev.) For what is understood by the seven devils, but all vices? For since all time is comprehended by seven days, rightly by the number seven is universality represented: Mary therefore had seven devils, for she was full of every kind of vice. It follows, *And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who ministered to him of their substance.*

Jerome. (in Matt. 27:55.) It was a Jewish custom, nor was it thought blameable, according to the ancient manners of that nation, that women should afford of their substance food and clothing to their teachers. This custom, as it might cause offence to the Gentiles, St. Paul relates he had cast off. (1 Cor.

9:15.) But these ministered unto the Lord of their substance, that He might reap their carnal things from whom they had reaped spiritual things. Not that the Lord needed the food of His creatures, but that He might set an example to masters, that they ought to be content with food and clothing from their disciples.

Bede. But Mary is by interpretation, "bitter sea," because of the loud wailing of her penitence; Magdalene, "a tower, or rather belonging to a tower," from the tower of which it is said, *Thou art become my hope, my strong tower from the face of my enemy.* (Ps. 61:3.) Joanna is by interpretation "the Lord her grace," or "the merciful Lord," for from Him cometh every thing that we live upon. But if Mary, cleansed from the corruption of her sins, points to the Church of the Gentiles, why does not Joanna represent the same Church formerly subject to the worship of idols?

For every evil spirit whilst he acts for the devil's kingdom, is as it were Herod's steward. Susanna is interpreted, "a lily," or its grace, because of the fragrance and whiteness of the heavenly life, and the golden heat of inward love.

8:4–15

4. And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

5. A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9. And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?

10. And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.

11. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

12. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

13. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.

14. And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

15. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.

Theophylact. That which David had foretold in the person of Christ, *I will open my mouth in parables*, (Ps. 78:2.) the Lord here fulfils; as it is said, *And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable.* But the Lord speaks by a parable, first indeed that He may make His hearers more attentive. For men were accustomed to exercise their minds on dark sayings, and to despise what was plain; and next, that the unworthy might not receive what was spoken mystically.

Origen. And therefore it is significantly said, *When much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city.* For not many but few there are who walk the strait road, and find the way which leadeth to life. Hence Matthew says, that He taught without the house by parables, but within the house explained the parable to His disciples. (Matt. 13:36.)

Eusebius. Now Christ most fitly puts forth His first parable to the multitude not only of those who then stood by, but of those also who were to come after them, inducing them to listen to His words, saying, *A sower went out to sow his seed.*

Bede. The sower we can conceive to be none other but the Son of God, Who going forth from His Father's bosom whither no creature had attained, came into the world that He might bear witness to the truth. (John 18:37.)

Chrysostom. (Hom. 44. in Matt.) Now His going, Who is every where, was not local, but through the vail of the flesh He approached us. But Christ fitly denominates His advent, His going forth. For we were aliens from God, and cast out as criminals, and rebels to the king, but he who wishes to reconcile man, going out to them, speaks to them without, until having become meet for the royal presence, He brings them within; so also did Christ.

Theophylact. But He went out now, not to destroy the husbandmen, or to burn up the earth, but He went out to sow. For oftimes the husbandman who sows, goes out for some other cause, not only to sow.

Eusebius. Some went out from the heavenly country and descended among men, not however to sow, for they were not sowers, but ministering spirits sent forth to minister. (Heb. 1:14.) Moses also and the prophets after him did not plant in men the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but by keeping back the foolish from the error of iniquity, and the worship of idols, they tilled as it were the souls of men, and brought them into cultivation. But the only Sower of all, the Word of God, went out to sow the new seed of the Gospel, that is, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

Theophylact. But the Son of God never ceases to sow in our hearts, for not only when teaching, but creating, He sows good seed in our hearts.

Titus Bostrensis. But He went out to sow *His* seed, He receives not the word as borrowed, for He is by nature the Word of the living God. The seed is not then of Paul, or of John, but they have it because they have received it. Christ has His own seed, drawing forth His teaching from His own nature.

Hence also the Jews said, *How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?* (John 7:15.)

Eusebius. He teaches therefore that there are two classes of those who received the seed; the first, of those who have been made worthy of the heavenly calling, but fall from grace through carelessness and sloth; but the second, of those who multiply the seed bearing good fruit. But according to Matthew he makes three divisions in each class. For those who corrupt the seed have not all the same manner of destruction, and those who bear fruit from it do not receive an equal abundance. He wisely sets forth the cases of those who lose the seed. For some though they have not sinned, have lost the good seed implanted in their hearts, through its having been withdrawn from their thoughts and memory by evil spirits, and devils who fly through the air; or deceitful and cunning men, whom He calls the birds of the air. Hence it follows, *And as he sowed, some fell by the way side.*

Theophylact. He said not that the sower threw some on the way side, but that *it fell by the way side.* For he who sows teaches the right word, but the word falls in different ways upon the hearers, so that some of them are called *the way side: and it was trodden down, and the birds of the air devoured it.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For every way side is in some measure dry and uncultivated, because it is trodden down by all men, and no seed gains moisture on it. So the divine warning reaches not the unteachable heart, that it should bring forth the praise of virtue. These then are the ways frequented by unclean spirits. There are again some who bear faith about them, as if it consisted in the nakedness of words; their faith is without root, of whom it is added, *And some fell upon a rock, and as soon as it sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.*

Bede. The rock, he says, is the hard and unsubdued heart. Now the moisture at the root of the seed is the same as what is called in another parable, the oil to trim the lamps of the virgins, that is, love and stedfastness in virtue. (Matt. 25.)

Eusebius. There are also some who through covetousness, the desire of pleasure and worldly cares, which indeed Christ calls thorns, suffer the seed which has been sown in them to be choked.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 44. in Matt.) For as the thorns do not let the seed grow up, but when it has been sown choke it by thickening round it, so the cares of this present life permit not the seed to bear fruit. But in things of sense the husbandman must be reproved who would sow amid thorns on a rock and the way side, for it is impossible that the rocks should become earth, the way not be a way, the thorns not be thorns. But in rational things it is otherwise. For it is possible that the rock should be converted into a fruitful soil, the way not be trodden down, the thorns dispersed.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now the rich and fruitful ground is the honest and good hearts which receive deeply the seeds of the word, and retain them and cherish them. And whatever is added to this, *And some fell upon good ground, and springing up, brought forth fruit an hundredfold.* For when the divine word is poured into a soul free from all anxieties, then it strikes root deep, and sends forth as it were the ear, and in its due season comes to perfection.

Bede. For by fruit a hundredfold, he means perfect fruit. For the number ten is always taken to imply perfection, because in ten precepts is contained the keeping, or the observance of the law. But the number ten multiplied by itself amounts to a hundred; hence by a hundred very great perfection is signified.

Cyril of Alexandria. But what the meaning of the parable is, let us hear from him who made it, as it follows, *And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Basil. (Hom. in Princ. Prov.) Hearing has reference to the understanding. By this then our Lord stirs us up to listen attentively to the meaning of those things which are spoken.

Bede. For as often as the admonition occurs either in the Gospel or the Revelation of St. John, it signifies that there is a mystical meaning in what is said, and we must inquire more closely into it. Hence the disciples who were ignorant ask our Saviour, for it follows, *And his disciples asked him*, &c. But let no one suppose that as soon as the parable was finished His disciples asked Him, but as Mark says, *When he was alone they asked him.* (Mark 4:10.)

Origen. (in Prov. 1.) Now a parable is a narration of an action as done, yet not done according to the letter, though it might have been, representing certain things by means of others which are given in the parable. An enigma is a continued story of things which are spoken of as done, and yet have not been done, nor are possible to be done, but contains a concealed meaning, as that which is mentioned in the Book of Judges, that *the trees went forth to anoint a king over them.* (Judges 9:8.) But it was not literally a fact as is said, *A sower went out to sow*, like those facts related in history, yet it might have been so.

Eusebius. But our Lord told them the reason why He spake to the multitudes in parables, as follows, *And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of God.*

Gregory Nazianzen. (ubi sup.) When you hear this you must not entertain the notion of different natures, as certain heretics do, who think that some men indeed are of a perishing nature, others of a saving nature, but that some are so constituted that their will leads them to better or worse. But add to the words, *To you it is given*, if willing and truly worthy.

Theophylact. But to those who are unworthy of such mysteries, they are obscurely spoken. Hence it follows, *But to the rest in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.* For they think they see, but see not, and hear indeed, but do not understand. For this reason Christ hides this from them, lest they should beget a greater prejudice against them, if after they had known the mysteries of Christ, they despised them. For he who understands and afterwards despises, shall be more severely punished.

Bede. Rightly then do they hear in parables, who having closed the senses of their heart, care not to know the truth, forgetful of what the Lord told them. *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

Gregory. (in Hom. 15 in Ev.) But our Lord condescended to explain what He said, that we might know how to seek for explanation in those things which He is unwilling to explain through Himself. For it follows, *Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*

Eusebius. Now He says, that there are three reasons why men destroy the seed implanted in their hearts. For some destroy the seed that is hid in them by lightly giving heed to those that wish to deceive, of whom He adds, *Those by the way side are they that hear: then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts.*

Bede. Who in truth deign to receive the word which they hear with no faith, with no understanding, at least with no attempt to test the value of it.

Eusebius. But some there are who having not received the word in any depth of heart, are soon overcome when adversity assails them, of whom it is added, *They on the rock are they which when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For when they enter the Church they gladly wait on the divine mysteries, but with infirmity of purpose. But when they leave the Church they forget the sacred discipline, and as long as Christians are undisturbed, their faith is lasting; but when persecution harasses, their heart fails them, for their faith was without root.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Many men propose to begin a good work, but as soon as they have become annoyed by adversity or temptation, they abandon what they had begun. The rocky ground then had no moisture to carry on to constancy fruit which it had put forth.

Eusebius. But some choke the seed which has been deposited in them with riches and vain delights, as if with choking thorns, of whom it is added, *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches of this life, &c.*

Gregory. (ubi sup.) It is wonderful that the Lord has represented riches as thorns, for these prick, while those delight, and yet they are thorns, for they lacerate the mind by the prickings of their thoughts, and whenever they entice to see they draw blood, as if inflicting a wound. But there are two things which He joins to riches, cares and pleasures, for they oppress the mind by anxiety and unnerve it by luxuries, but they choke the seed, for they strangle the throat of the heart with vexatious thoughts, and while they let not a good desire enter the heart, they close up as it were the passage of the vital breath.

Eusebius. Now these things were foretold by our Saviour according to His foreknowledge, and that their case is so, experience testifies. For in no wise do men fall away from the truth of divine worship, but according to some of the causes before mentioned by Him.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 44. in Matt.) And to sum up many things in a few words. Some indeed as careless hearers, some as weak, but others as the very slaves of pleasure and worldly things, hold aloof from what is good. The order of the way side, the rock, and the thorns is well, for we have first need of recollection and caution, next of fortitude, and then of contempt of things present. He therefore places the good ground in opposition to the way, the rock, and the thorns. *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, &c.* For they who are on the way side keep not the word, but the devil takes away their seed. But they who are on the rock sustain not patiently the assaults of temptation through weakness. But they who are among thorns bear no fruit, but are choked.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) The good ground then bears fruit through patience, for nothing we do is good unless we endure patiently our closest evils. They therefore bear fruit through patience, who when they bear strifes humbly, are after the scourge received with joy to a heavenly rest.

8:16–18

16. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.

Bede. Having before said to His Apostles, *Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to others in parables*; He now shews that by them at length must the same mystery be revealed also to others, saying, *No man when he hath lighted a candle covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it tender a bed.*

Eusebius. As if He said, As a lantern is lighted that it should give light, not that it should be covered under a bushel or a bed, so also the secrets of the kingdom of heaven when uttered in parables, although hid from those who are strangers to the faith, will not however to all men appear obscure. Hence he adds, *For nothing is secret that shall not be made manifest, neither any thing hid that shall not be known, and come abroad.* As if He said, Though many things are spoken in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand, because of their unbelief, yet the whole matter shall be revealed.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. q. 12.) Or else in these words He typically sets forth the boldness of preaching, that no one should, through fear of fleshly ills, conceal the light of knowledge. For under the names of vessel and bed, he represents the flesh, but of that of lantern, the word, which whosoever keeps hid through fear of the troubles of the flesh, sets the flesh itself before the manifestation of the truth, and by it he as it were covers the word, who fears to preach it. But he places a candle upon a candlestick who so submits his body to the service of God, that the preaching of the truth stands highest in his estimation, the service of the body lowest.

Origen. But he who would adapt his lantern to the more perfect disciples of Christ, must persuade us by those things which were spoken of John, for he was a burning and a shining light. (John 5:35.) It becomes not him then who lights the light of reason in his soul to hide it under a bed where men sleep, nor under any vessel, for he who does this provides not for those who enter the house for whom the candle is prepared, but they must set it upon a candlestick, that is, the whole Church.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 15. in Matt.) By these words he leads them to diligence of life, teaching them to be strong as exposed to the view of all men, and fighting in the world as on a stage. As if he said, Think not that we dwell in a small part of the world, for ye will be known of all men, since it cannot be that so great virtue should lie hid.

Maximus. (Quæst. in Script. 63.) Or perhaps the Lord calls Himself a light shining to all who inhabit the house, that is, the world, since He is by nature God, but by the dispensation made flesh. And so like the light of the lamp He abides in the vessel of the flesh by means of the soul as the light in the vessel of the lamp by means of the flame. But by the candlestick he describes the Church over which the divine word shines, illuminating the house as it were by the rays of truth. But under the similitude of a vessel or bed he referred to the observance of the law, under which the word will not be contained.

Bede. But the Lord ceases not to teach us to hearken to His word, that we may be able both to constantly meditate on it in our own minds, and to bring it forth for the instruction of others. Hence it follows, *Take heed therefore how ye hear; for whosoever hath, to him shall be given.* As if he says, Give heed with all your mind to the word which ye hear, for to him who has a love of the word, shall be given also the sense of understanding what he loves; but whoso hath no love of hearing the word, though he deems himself skilful either from natural genius, or the exercise of learning, will have no delight in the sweetness of wisdom; for oftentimes the slothful man is gifted with capacities, that if he neglect them he may be the more justly punished for his negligence, since that which he can obtain without labour he disdains to know, and sometimes the studious man is oppressed with slowness of apprehension, in order that the more he labours in his inquiries, the greater may be the recompense of his reward.

8:19–21

19. Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press.

20. And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

21. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Titus Bostrensis. Our Lord had left His kinsfolk according to the flesh, and was occupied in His Father's teaching. But when they began to feel His absence, they came unto Him, as it is said, *Then came unto him his mother and his brethren.* When you hear of our Lord's brethren you must include also the notions of piety and grace. For no one in regard of His divine nature is the brother of the Saviour, (for He is the Only-begotten,) but He has, by the grace of piety, made us partakers in His flesh and His blood, and He who is by nature God has become our brother.

Bede. But those who are said to be our Lord's brethren according to the flesh, you must not imagine to be the children of the blessed Mary, the mother of God, as Helvidius thinks, nor the children of Joseph by another wife, as some say, but rather believe to be their kinsfolk.

Titus Bostrensis. His brethren thought that when He heard of their presence He would send away the people, from respect to His mother's name, and from His affection towards her, as it follows, *And it was told him, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 44. in Matt.) Think what it was, when the whole people stood by, and were hanging upon His mouth, (for His teaching had already begun,) to withdraw Him away from them. Our Lord accordingly answers as it were rebuking them, as it follows, *And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are they which hear the word of God, and do it, &c.*

Ambrose. The moral teacher who gives himself an example to others, when about to enjoin upon others, that he who has not left father and mother, is not worthy of the Son of God, first submits Himself to this precept, not that He denies the claims of filial piety, (for it is His own sentence, He that knoweth not his father and mother shall die the death,) but because He knows that He is more bound to obey His Father's mysteries than the feelings of His mother. Nor however are His parents harshly rejected, but the bonds of the mind are shewn to be more sacred than those of the body. Therefore in this place He does not disown His mother, (as some heretics say, eagerly catching at His speech,) since she is also acknowledged from the cross; but the law of heavenly ordinances is preferred to earthly affection.

Bede. They then who hear the word of God and do it, are called the mother of our Lord, because they daily in their actions or words bring Him forth as it were in their inmost hearts; they also are His brethren where they do the will of His Father, Who is in heaven.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 41. in Matt.) Now He does not say this by way of reproof to His mother, but to greatly assist her, for if He was anxious for others to beget in them a just opinion of Himself, much more was He for His mother. And He had not raised her to such a height if she were always to expect to be honoured by Him as a son, and never to consider Him as her Lord.

Theophylact. But some take this to mean that certain men, hating Christ's teaching, and mocking at Him for His doctrine, said, *Thy mother and thy brethren stand without wishing to see thee*; as if thereby to shew His meanness of birth. And He therefore knowing their hearts gave them this answer, that meanness of birth harms not, but if a man, though of low birth, hear the word of God, He reckons him as His kinsman. Because however hearing only saves no one, but rather condemns, He adds, *and doeth it*; for it becomes us both to hear and to do. But by the word of God He means His own teaching, for all the words which He Himself spake were from His Father.

Ambrose. In a mystical sense he ought not to stand without, who was seeking Christ. Hence also that saying, *Come unto him, and be enlightened* (Ps. 34:6. Vulg.). For if they stand without, not even parents themselves are acknowledged; and perhaps for our example they are not. How are we acknowledged by Him if we stand without? That meaning also is not unreasonable, because by the figure of parents He points to the Jews of whom Christ was born, (Rom. 9:5.) and thought the Church to be preferred to the synagogue.

Bede. For they cannot enter within when He is teaching whose words they refuse to understand spiritually. But the multitude went before and entered into the house, because when the Jews rejected Christ the Gentiles flocked to Him. But those who stand without, wishing to see Christ, are they, who not seeking a spiritual sense in the law, have placed themselves without to guard the letter of it, and as it were rather compel Christ to go out, to teach them earthly things, than consent to enter in themselves to learn spiritual things.

8:22–25

22. Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples: and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23. But as they sailed he fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

24. And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.

25. And he said unto them, Where is your faith? And they being afraid wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this! for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

Cyril of Alexandria. When the disciples saw that all men received help from Christ, it seemed fitting that they themselves also should in turn rejoice in the benefits of Christ. For no one regards that which happens in the person of another equally with that to himself. The Lord therefore exposed the disciples to the sea and the winds, as it follows, *Now it came to pass on a certain day that he went into a ship with his disciples; and he said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake: and they launched forth.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 27. in Matt.) Luke indeed avoids the question which might be put to him with regard to the order of time, saying, that He went into a ship on a certain day. Now if the storm had arisen when our Lord was awake, the disciples either had not feared, or not believed that He could do such a thing. For this cause He sleeps, giving them an occasion for fear; for it follows, *But as they sailed he fell asleep; and there came down a storm of wind on the lake.*

Ambrose. We are told above, moreover, that He passed the night in prayer. How then does He here fall asleep in a storm? The security of power is expressed, that while all were afraid, He alone lay fearless; but He lay asleep in the body, while in the mind he was in the mystery of divinity. For nothing happens without the Word.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) But it seems to have been especially and wonderfully ordained that they should not seek His assistance when first the storm began to affect the boat, but after the danger had increased, in order that the power of the Divine Majesty might be made more manifest. Hence it is said, *And they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.* This indeed our Lord allowed for the sake of trial, that having confessed their danger they should acknowledge the greatness of the miracle. Hence when their great danger had driven them into intolerable fear, having no other hope of safety but the Lord of power Himself, they awoke Him. It follows, *And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, we perish.*

Augustine. (de Cons. Ev. l. 2. c. 24.) Matthew says, *Master, save us, we perish.* Mark, *Master, carest thou not that we perish?* There is the same expression in all of men awakening our Lord, and anxious for their safety. Nor is it worth while to enquire which of these was most likely to have been said to Christ. For whether they said one of these three, or some other words which no Evangelist has mentioned, but of the same import, what matter is it? Though at the same time this may have been the case, that by the many who awoke Him, all these things were said, one by one, and another by another.

Cyril of Alexandria. But it could not be that they should perish while the Almighty was with them. Christ then arose, Who has power over all things, and immediately quells the storm and the violence of the wind, and the tempest ceased, and there was a calm. Herein He shews Himself to be God, to Whom it is said, *Thou rulest the raging of the sea: when the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them* (Ps. 89:10.). So then as He sailed, our Lord manifested both natures in one and the same person, seeing that He who as man slept in the ship, as God by His word stilled the raging of the sea.

Cyril of Alexandria. But together with the raging of the waters, He quiets also the tumult of their souls, as it follows, *And he said unto them, Where is your faith?* By which word He shewed, that it is not so much the assault of temptation which causes fear, as faint-heartedness. For as gold is proved in the fire, so is faith in temptation.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. ut sup.) Now this is related by the other Evangelists in different words. For Matthew says, that Jesus said, *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* (Matt. 8.) but Mark as follows, *Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?* (Mark 4.) i. e. that perfect faith like the grain of mustard seed. Mark then also says, *O ye of little faith*; but Luke, *Where is your faith?* And indeed all these may have been said, *Why are ye fearful? Where is your faith? O ye of little faith.* Hence one Evangelist relates one, another another.

Cyril of Alexandria. When the tempest was quelled at the command of Christ, the disciples in astonishment whispered one to the other, as it follows, *And they being afraid wondered, &c.* Now the disciples said not this as ignorant of Him, for they knew that He was God, and Jesus the Son of God. But they marvel at the exceeding vastness of His natural power, and the glory of His divinity, although He was like to us, and visible in the flesh. Hence they say, *Who is this?* that is, of what manner of man? how great, and with what great power and majesty? for it is a mighty work, a lordly command, no abject petition.

Bede. Or, it was not His disciples, but the sailors and others in the ship who wondered.

But allegorically, the sea or lake is the dark and bitter tide of the world, the ship is the wood of the cross, by help of which the faithful, having passed the waves of this world, reach the shore of a heavenly country.

Ambrose. Our Lord therefore, who knew that He came upon earth for a divine mystery, having left His kinsfolk, went up into the ship.

Bede. His disciples also, when summoned, enter in with Him. Hence He says, *If any one will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* (Mat. 16:24.) While His disciples are sailing, that is, the faithful passing through this world, and meditating in their minds the rest of the world to come, and by the breath of the Holy Spirit, or also their own exertions, eagerly leaving behind them the unbelieving pride of the world, suddenly our Lord fell asleep, that is, the time of our Lord's passion was come, and the storm descended. For when our Lord entered the sleep of death upon the cross, the waves of persecution rose, stirred up by the breath of the devil, but while the patience of the Lord is not disturbed by the waves, the faint hearts of the disciples are shaken and tremble. They awoke our Lord lest they should perish while He slept, because having seen His death they wish for His resurrection, for if that were delayed they would perish for ever. He rises therefore and rebukes the wind, since by His sudden rising again He put down the pride of the devil who had the power of death. (Heb. 2:14.) But He makes the tempest of nature to cease, since by His resurrection He baffled the rage of the Jews, who plotted His death.

Ambrose. You must remember that no one can pass from the course of this life without temptations, for temptation is the trial of faith. We are therefore subject to the storms of spiritual wickedness, but as watchful sailors we must awake the Pilot, who does not obey but commands the winds, who although He now no longer sleeps in the sleep of His own body, yet let us beware, lest through the sleep of our bodies He is to us asleep and at rest. But they are rightly reproved who feared, when Christ was present; since he surely who clings to Him can in no wise perish.

Bede. In like manner, when He appeared after His death to His disciples, He upbraided them with their unbelief, (Mark 16:14.) and thus having calmed the swelling waves, He made plain to all the power of His divinity.

8:26–39

26. And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27. And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.

28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? I beseech thee, torment me not.

29. (For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30. And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him.

31. And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.

32. And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And he suffered them.

33. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34. When they that fed them saw what was done, they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country.

35. Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36. They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37. Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from them; for they were taken with great fear: and he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38. Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him: but Jesus sent him away, saying,

39. Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Saviour, as He sailed with His disciples, came to a port, as it is said, *And they arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.*

Titus Bostrensis. Many accurate copies have neither "Gerazenes" nor "Gadarenes," but "Gergezenes." For Gadara is a city in Judæa, but neither lake nor sea is found at it; and Geraza is a city of Arabia, having neither lake nor sea near. But Gergeza, from which the Gergezenes are called, is an ancient city near the lake of Tiberias, above which is a rock hanging over the lake, into which they say the swine were dashed down by the devils. But since Gadara and Geraza border upon the land of the Gergezenes, it is probable that the swine were led from thence to their parts.

Bede. For Geraza is a famous city of Arabia, on the other side of the Jordan, close to the mountain of Galaad, which was possessed by the tribe of Manasseh, and not far from the lake of Tiberias, into which the swine were cast headlong.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 28. in Matt.) But as soon as our Lord had departed from the sea, He meets with another more awful wonder. For the demoniac, like an evil slave, when he sees Him confirms his bondage, as it follows, *And when he went forth to land, there met him out of the city a certain man, &c.*

Augustine. (Cons. Ev. ut sup.) Whereas Matthew says, that there were two possessed, but Mark and Luke mention only one; you must understand one of them to be a more distinguished and famous person, for whom that neighbourhood was chiefly distressed, and in whose restoration they were greatly interested. Wishing to signify this, the two Evangelists thought right to mention him alone, concerning whom the report of this miracle had been most extensively noised abroad.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 28. in Matt.) Or, Luke selected from the two the one who was most savage. Hence he gives the most melancholy account of his calamity, adding, *And he wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs.* But the evil spirits visit the tombs of the dead, to instil into men that dangerous notion, that the souls of the dead become evil spirits.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now his going naked among the tombs of the dead was a mark of demoniacal wildness. But God permits some in His providence to become subject to evil spirits, that we may ascertain through them of what kind the evil spirits are towards us, in order that we may refuse to be made subject unto them, and so by the suffering of one many may be edified.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But because the people acknowledged Him to be man, the devils came publishing His divinity, which even the sea had proclaimed by its calmness. Hence it follows, *When he saw Jesus he fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Mark here the combination of fear with boldness and great desperation, for it is a sign of devilish despair to speak out boldly, *What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high?* but of fear when they pray, *I beseech thee not to cast me out.* But if thou knowest Him to be the Son of God most high, thou confessest Him to be the God of heaven and earth, and of all things that are contained in them. How then dost thou make use not of thy own but His words, saying, *What have I to do with thee?* But what earthly prince will altogether endure to have his subjects tormented by barbarians? Hence it follows, *For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of him.* And He shews the necessity of the command, adding, *For oftentimes it had caught him, &c.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Therefore since no one could hold the possessed, Christ goes to him and addresses him. It follows, *And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name?*

Bede. He enquires not his name as ignorant of it, but that when the demoniac had confessed the plague which he endured, the power of the Healer might shine forth more welcome to him. But the priests also of our time, who through the grace of exorcism are able to cast out devils, are wont to say that the sufferers can no otherwise be cured than by openly telling in confession every thing which either waking or sleeping they have endured from the unclean spirits, and above all when they imagine that the devils seek and obtain the possession of the human body. So also here the confession is added, *And he said, Legion, because many devils were entered into him.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (Hom. 14. in Cantic.) Certain evil spirits imitating the heavenly hosts and the legions of Angels say that they are legions. As also their prince says that he will exalt his throne above the stars that he may be like to the Most High. (Isaiah 14:13.)

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But when the Lord had overcome the evil spirits which disturbed His creatures, they thought that because of the enormity of those things which had been done, He would not wait the time of their punishment, and therefore since they could not deny their guilt, they entreat that they may not quickly undergo the penalty. As it follows, *And they besought him that he would not command them to go out into the deep.*

Theophylact. Which indeed the devils demand, wishing yet longer to mix with mankind.

Cyril of Alexandria. And hence it is plain that the rebel hosts against the Divine Majesty were thrust down to hell by the unspeakable power of the Saviour.

Maximus. (Ep. ad Georgium.) Now the Lord ordains for each class of sinners an appropriate punishment. The fire of Hell unquenchable for fleshly burnings, gnashing of teeth for wanton mirth, intolerable thirst for pleasure and revelry, the worm that dieth not for a crooked and malignant heart, everlasting darkness for ignorance and deceit, the bottomless pit for pride. Hence the deep is assigned to the devils as unto the proud, it follows, *And there was there an herd of swine, &c.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. 24.) The words of Mark, that there was a herd of swine *nigh unto the mountains*, and of Luke, *on the mountains*, do not differ from one another. For the herd of swine was so large, that they might be part on the mountain, part near it. For there were two thousand swine, as Mark has stated. (Mark 5:13.)

Ambrose. But the devils could not endure the clearness of the light of heaven, as those who have weak eyes can not bear the sun's rays.

Cyril of Alexandria. The multitude of unclean spirits seek therefore to be sent into the herd of unclean swine, like to themselves, for it follows, *And they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them.*

Athanasius. (de vita Anton.) But if they have no power over swine, the evil spirits have much less against men who are made after the image of God. We ought then to fear God alone, but despise them.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the Lord granted them permission, that this might be among other things to us an occasion of benefit, and the confidence of our safety. It follows, *And he suffered them.* We must therefore consider that the evil spirits are hostile to those which are subject to them, and this will be evident from their sending down the swine violently into the waters and choking them; as it follows, *Then went the devils out of the man and entered into the swine, and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.* And this Christ permitted to them which sought it, that it might appear from the event how cruel they are. It was also necessary to shew that the Son of God has no less power to foresee than the Father, that equal glory might be manifested in each.

Titus Bostrensis. (Vide Victor. Ant. in Mark 5.) But the shepherds take flight, lest they should perish with the swine. Hence it follows, *When they that fed them saw what was done they fled, and went and told it in the city and in the country*, and excited the like alarm among the citizens. But the severity of their loss led them to the Saviour; for it follows, *Then they went out to see what was done, and came to Jesus*; and here remark, that while God punishes men in their substance, He confers a blessing upon their souls. But when they had set out, they see him in his right mind who had been long vexed. It follows, *And they found the man out of whom the devils had departed sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed*, (whereas before he was naked,) *and in his right mind.* For he departed not from those feet, where he obtained safety; and so acknowledging the miracle, they were astonished at the cure of the malady, and marvelled at the event; for it follows, *And they were afraid.* But this thing they discover partly by sight, partly hearing it in words. It follows, *They also which saw it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.* But they ought to have besought the Lord not to depart from them, but to be the guardian of their country, that no evil spirits might come near them; but through fear they lost their own salvation, asking the Saviour to depart. It follows, *Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about besought him to depart from, them, for they were taken with great fear.*

Theophylact. They feared lest they should again suffer some loss, as they had suffered in the drowning of the swine.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But observe the humility of Christ; for when after conferring so great benefits upon them they sent Him away, He offers no obstacle, but departs, leaving those who had proclaimed themselves unworthy of His teaching. It follows, *And he went up into the ship, and returned back again.*

Titus Bostrensis. But as He was departing, the man who had been afflicted will not part from his Saviour, for it follows, *Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought him that he might be with him.*

Theophylact. For as one who had been tried by experience, he feared, lest perhaps when far from Jesus he should again become the prey of evil spirits. But the Lord shews him, that though He is not present with him, He can protect by His grace, for it follows, *But Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done for thee.* But he said not, "how great things I have done for thee," giving us an example of humility, that we should attribute all our righteousness to God.

Titus Bostrensis. He does not however turn aside from the law of truth, for whatever the Son doth the Father doth. But why does He, who every where charged those who were delivered to tell no one, say to this man who was delivered from the legion, *Shew how great things God hath done for thee?* Because in truth that whole country knew not God, and was in bondage to the worship of devils. Or more truly, now that He refers the miracle to His Father, He says, *Shew how great, &c.* but when He speaks of Himself He charges to tell no one. But he who was healed of the evil spirits knew Jesus to be God, and therefore published what great things God had done for him. For it follows, *And he went through the whole city, &c.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) And so abandoning those who had proclaimed themselves unworthy of His teaching, He appoints as their teacher the man who had been released from the evil spirits.

Bede. Now mystically; Gerasa signifies the Gentile nations, whom after His passion and resurrection Christ visited in His preachers. Hence Gerasa or Gergesa, as some say, is by interpretation "casting out an inhabitant," that is, the devil by whom it was before possessed, or, "a stranger approaching," who before was afar off.

Ambrose. Now although the number of those healed by Christ is different in Luke and Matthew, yet the mystery is one and the same. For as he who had a devil is the figure of the Gentile people, the two also in like manner take the figure of the Gentiles. For whereas Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; the family of Shem only was called to the possession of God, and from the other two the people of different nations were descended. He (as Luke says) had devils long time, inasmuch as the Gentile people was vexed from the deluge down to our Lord's coming. But he was naked, because the Gentiles lost the garment of their nature and virtue.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 13.) He abode in no house, that is, he had no rest in his conscience; he dwelt among the tombs, because he delighted in dead works in his sins.

Ambrose. Or what are the bodies of the unbelieving but kinds of tombs in which the word of God abides not?

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Now that he was bound by brazen fetters and chains, signifies the harsh and severe laws of the Gentiles, by which also in their states offences are restrained. But, that having burst these chains he was driven by the evil spirit into the wilderness, means that having broken through these laws, he was also led by lust to those crimes which exceeded the ordinary life of men. By the expression that there was in him a legion of devils, the nations are signified who served many devils. But the fact that the devils were permitted to go into the swine, which fed on the mountains, signifies also the unclean and proud men over whom the evil spirits have dominion, because of their worship of idols. For the swine are they who, after the manner of unclean animals without speech and reason, have defiled the grace of their natural virtues by the filthy actions of their life.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But by their being sent down violently into the lake, it is meant that the Church has been purified, and now that the Gentiles are delivered from the dominion of evil spirits, those who refuse to believe in Christ, carry on their unholy rites in hidden places with dark and secret watchings.

Ambrose. They are carried violently down, for they are reclaimed not by the contemplation of any good deed, but thrust as from a higher place to a lower, along the downward path of iniquity, they perish amidst the waves of this world, shut out from the approach of air. For they who are carried to and fro by the rapid tide of pleasure cannot receive the communication of the Spirit; we see then that man himself is the author of his own misery. For unless a man lived like the swine, the devil would never have received power over him, or received it, not to destroy but to prove him. And perhaps the devil, who after the coming of our Lord can no longer steal away the good, seeks not the destruction of all men, but only the wanton, as the robber lies in wait not for armed men, but the unarmed. *When those who kept the herd saw this they fled.* For neither the teachers of philosophy nor the chief of the synagogue can bring a cure to perishing mankind. It is Christ alone who takes away the sins of the people.

Augustine. (de Qu. Evan. l. ii. q. 13.) Or, by the herdsmen of the swine flying and telling these things, He represents certain rulers of the wicked, who though they evade the law of Christianity, yet proclaim it among the nations by their astonishment and wonder. But by the Gerasenes, when they knew what was done, asking Jesus to depart from them, for they were struck with great fear, he represents the multitude delighting in their old pleasures, honouring indeed, but unwilling to endure the Christian law, saying that they cannot fulfil it, while they still marvel at the faithful released from their former abandoned mode of life.

Ambrose. Or there seems to have been a kind of synagogue in the city of the Gerasenes who besought our Lord to depart, because they were seized with great fear. For the weak mind receives not the word of God, nor can it endure the burden of wisdom. And therefore He no longer troubled them, but ascends from the lower parts to the higher, from the Synagogue to the Church, and returned across the lake. For no one passes from the Church to the Synagogue without endangering his salvation. But whoever desires to pass from the Synagogue to the Church, let him take up his cross, that he may avoid the danger.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But that he, now that he is healed, desires to be with Christ, and it is said to him, *Return to thy house, and tell what great things God has done for thee*, implies that each should understand, that after the remission of his sins he should return to a good conscience as to his home, and obey the Gospel for the salvation of others, in order that there he may rest with Christ, lest by too early wishing to be with Christ he neglect the ministry of preaching necessary for this redemption of his brethren.

8:40–48

40. And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.

41. And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:

42. For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.

43. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44. Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched.

45. And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46. And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

48. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 28.) After relating the miracle of the Gadarenes, Luke goes on to relate that of the ruler of the synagogue's daughter; saying, *And it came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him: for they were all waiting for him.*

Theophylact. At once both because of His teaching, and His miracles.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But the event which He adds, *And, behold, there came a man named Jairus*, must not be supposed to have taken place immediately, but first that of the feast of the publicans which Matthew mentions, (Matt. 9:18.) to which he so joins on this that it cannot consequently be understood to have happened otherwise.

Titus Bostrensis. (Vide Victor. Ant. in Mark 5.) The name is inserted for the sake of the Jews, who at that time well knew the event, that the name might be a demonstrative proof of the miracle. And there came not one of the lowest, but a ruler of the synagogue, that the mouths of the Jews might be the more closed. As it follows, *And he was a ruler of the synagogue*. Now he came to Christ because of his need; for grief sometimes urges us to do those things which are right, according to the Psalm, *Hold their mouths with bit and bridle, who come not nigh unto thee.* (Ps. 32:9.)

Theophylact. Through urgent need then he fell at His feet, as it follows, *And he fell at Jesus' feet*; but it were right for him without a pressing necessity to fall at Christ's feet and acknowledge Him to be God.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 31. in Matt.) But mark his dulness of heart, for it follows, *and besought him that he would come into his house*; being ignorant in truth that He was able to heal when absent. For if he had known, he would have said as the centurion did, *Speak the word, and my daughter shall be healed.*

Greek Expositor. (Asterius.) But the cause of his coming is told by adding, *For he had only one daughter*, the prop of his house, the succession of his race, *about twelve years old*, in the very flower of her age; *and she lay dying*, about to be carried to the grave instead of her nuptial bed.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But the Lord had come not to judge the world, but to save it. Whereupon He does not weigh the rank of the petitioner, but calmly undertakes the work, knowing that what was to happen would be greater than what was asked. For He was called to heal the sick, but He knew that He would raise up one that was by this time dead, and implant on the earth a firm hope of the resurrection.

Ambrose. But when about to raise the dead, in order to bring faith to the ruler of the synagogue, He first cured the issue of blood. So also a temporal resurrection is celebrated at the Passion of our Lord, that the other might be believed to be eternal. *But as he went, the people thronged him.*

Cyril of Alexandria. (v. Chrys. 31. in Matt.) This was the greatest sign that He had really put on our flesh, and trampled under foot all pride. For they followed Him not afar off, but thronged Him.

Greek Expositor. (ubi sup.) Now a certain woman afflicted with a severe disease, whose infirmity had consumed her body, but physicians all her substance, finds her only hope in such great humbleness that she falls down before our Lord; of whom it follows, *And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, &c.*

Titus Bostrensis. (non occ.) Of how great praise then is this woman worthy, who with her bodily powers exhausted by the continual issue of blood, and with so great a crowd thronging around Him, in the strength of her affection and faith entered the crowd, and coming behind, secretly touched the hem of His garment.

Cyril of Alexandria. For it was not lawful for the unclean either to touch any of the holy saints, or come near a holy man.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 31. in Matt.) For by the custom of the Law a malady of this kind was accounted a great uncleanness. (Lev. 15:19–25.) Independently of this also, she had not yet a right estimation of Him, else she would not have thought to remain concealed, but nevertheless she came trusting to be healed.

Theophylact. But as when a man turns his eye to a shining light, or puts fuel to the fire, immediately they have their effects; so indeed he who brings faith to Him who is able to cure, immediately obtains his cure; as it is said, *and immediately her issue of blood stanched.*

Chrysostom. But not the garments alone saved her, (for the soldiers also allotted them among themselves,) but the earnestness of her faith.

Theophylact. For she believed, and was saved, and as was fitting first touched Christ with her mind, then with her body.

Greek Expositor. (Asterius.) But the Lord heard the woman's silent thoughts, and silently released her silent, permitting willingly the seizing of her cure. But afterwards He makes known the miracle, as it follows: *And Jesus said, Who touched me?*

Cyril of Alexandria. For the miracle which was performed escaped not the Lord, but He who knew all things asks as if He were ignorant.

Greek Expositor. (Victor. Ant.) Now His disciples who knew not what was asked, but supposed He spoke merely of one touching Him, answer our Lord's question, as follows, *When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude press thee and throng thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?* Our Lord therefore distinguishes the touching by His answer, as it follows, *And Jesus said, Somebody has touched me*: as He said also, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*, although all had bodily hearing of this kind; but it is not truly hearing if a man hear carelessly, nor truly touching if he touch unfaithfully. He now therefore publishes what was done, as it is added, *For I perceive that virtue is gone out of me*. He answers rather materially, in consideration of the minds of His hearers. He is here, however, manifested to us to be the true God, both by His miraculous deed, and by His word. For it is beyond us, and perhaps beyond angels also, to be able to communicate virtue as from our own nature. This belongs to the Supreme Nature alone. For nothing created possesses the power of healing, or even of doing any other like miracles, except it be divinely given. But it was not from desire of glory that He suffered not to remain concealed the exhibition of His divine power, Who had so often charged silence about His miracles, but because He looked to their advantage who are called through faith to grace.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) For first He removes the woman's fear, lest she should suffer the pangs of conscience, for as it were stealing the grace. Next He reproves her for thinking to lie concealed. Thirdly, He makes known her faith publicly for the sake of others, and betrays no less a miracle than the stanching of blood, by shewing that all things are open to His sight.

Cyril of Alexandria. Moreover, He persuaded the ruler of the synagogue to believe undoubtingly that He would rescue his daughter from the hands of death.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Now our Lord did not immediately discover her, for this reason, that by shewing that all things are known to Him, He might make the woman publish what was done, that the miracle might be free from all suspicion. Hence it follows, *And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling.*

Origen. But the same cure which the woman obtained by touching Him, our Saviour confirmed by His word; as it follows, *And he said unto her, Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace*, that is, Be released from thy scourge. And indeed He first heals her soul by faith, then truly her body.

Titus Bostrensis. (non occ.) He calls her daughter, as already healed because of her faith, for faith claims the grace of adoption.

Eusebius. (Eccles. Hist. l. vii. c. 18.) Now they say that the woman set up in Paneas (Cæsarea Philippi, whence she came) a noble triumphal monument of the mercy vouchsafed to her by the Saviour. For there stood upon a lofty pedestal near the entrance to her house a brasen statue of a woman on bended knees, and with her hands joined as if in prayer; opposite to which was erected another statue like to a man, made of the same material, clothed in a stole, (διπλοῖς. [a]) and holding forth his hand to the woman. At his feet upon the base itself a strange kind of plant was growing, which reaching to the hem of the brasen stole, was said to be the cure of all diseases. And they said that this statue represents Christ. It was destroyed by Maximinus.

Ambrose. Now mystically Christ had left the synagogue in Gerasa, and Him whom His own received not we strangers receive.

Bede. Or at the end of the world the Lord is about to return to the Jews, and to be gladly received by them through confession of the faith.

Ambrose. But whom do we suppose the chief of the synagogue to be, but the Law, from consideration of which our Lord had not entirely abandoned the synagogue.

Bede. Or, by the ruler of the synagogue is understood Moses. Hence he is rightly called Jairus, that is, "enlightening" or "enlightened," as he who receives the words of life to give to us, thereby both enlightens others, and is himself also enlightened by the Holy Spirit. But the ruler of the synagogue fell at the feet of Jesus, because the lawgiver with the whole race of the patriarchs knew that Christ, appearing in the flesh, would be far preferred to them. For if the head of Christ is God, (1 Cor. 11:3.) His feet must agreeably to this be taken for the Incarnation, by which He touched the earth of our mortality. The ruler asked Him to enter into his house, because he was desirous to behold His coming. His only daughter is the Synagogue, which alone was framed with a legal institution; which at twelve years of age, that is, when the time of puberty was approaching, lay dying; for having been brought up nobly by the prophets, as soon as it came to years of discretion, when it ought to bring forth spiritual fruits to God, being suddenly subdued through its weakness and error, it forgot to enter the way of spiritual life, and unless Christ had come to its help, would have fallen away into destruction. But the Lord going to heal the girl is thronged by the crowd, because giving wholesome warnings to the Jewish nation, He was borne down by the customs of a carnal people.

Ambrose. But while the Word of God hastens to this daughter of the ruler that He might save the children of Israel, the holy Church collected from among the Gentiles which was perishing by its falling away into gross crimes, seized first by faith the health prepared for others.

Bede. Now the issue of blood may be taken in two ways, that is, both for the prostitution of idolatry, and for those things which are done for the delights of the flesh and blood.

Ambrose. But what means it that this daughter of the ruler was dying at twelve years, and the woman was afflicted with the issue of blood for twelve years, but that it might be understood that as long as the Synagogue flourished the Church was weak. For almost in the same age of the world, the Synagogue began to grow up among the patriarchs, and idolatry to pollute the Gentile nation.

Ambrose. But as she had spent all her substance upon physicians, so the Gentile nations had lost all the gifts of nature.

Bede. Now by physicians understand either false doctors, or philosophers and teachers of secular laws, who disputing much concerning virtue and vice, promised that they would give to mortals useful instructions for life; or suppose that by the physicians are signified the unclean spirits themselves, who by giving as it were advice to men, procure themselves to be worshipped as God, on listening to whom the Gentiles the more they consumed the strength of their natural industry, so much the less were they able to be cured from the pollution of their iniquity.

Ambrose. Now hearing that the people of the Jews were sick, she begins to hope for the remedy of their salvation; she knew that the time was arrived when a Physician should come from heaven, she rose to meet Him, more ready from faith, more backward from modesty. For this is the part of modesty and faith to acknowledge weakness, not to despair of pardon. From modesty then she touched the hem of His garment; in faith she came, in piety believed, in wisdom knew herself to be healed; so the holy people of the Gentiles which believed God, blushed at its sins so as to desert them, offered its faith in believing, shewed its devotion in asking, put on wisdom in itself feeling its own cure, assumed boldness to confess that it had forestalled what was not its own. Now Christ is touched behind, as it is written, *Thou shall walk after the Lord thy God* (Deut. 13:4.)

Bede. And He Himself says, *If any man serve me, let him follow me.* (John 13:26.) Or, because not seeing Christ present in the flesh, now that the sacraments of the temporary dispensation were completed, the Church began to follow His footsteps through faith.

Gregory. (Mor. 3. c. 11. Job 2.) But while the crowd thronged Him, one woman touched our Redeemer, because all carnal men in the Church oppress Him from whom they are afar off, and they alone touch Him who are joined to Him in humility. The crowd therefore press Him and touch Him not, because it is both importunate in presence, and absent in life.

Bede. Or one believing woman touches the Lord, since Christ who is afflicted beyond measure by the diverse heresies multiplying around Him, is faithfully sought by the heart alone of the Catholic Church.

Ambrose. For they believe not who throng Him; they believe who touch. By faith Christ is touched, by faith He is seen. Lastly, to express the faith of her who touched Him, He says, *I know that virtue is gone out of me*, which is a more palpable sign, that the Divine Nature is not confined within the possibility of man's condition, and the compass of the human body, but eternal virtue overflows beyond the bounds of our mediocrity. For the Gentile people is not released by man's aid, but the gathering of nations is the gift of God, which even by its little faith turns to itself the everlasting mercy. For if we think what our faith is, and understand how great the Son of God is, we see that in comparison of Him we touch only the hem, we cannot reach the upper parts of the garment. If then we also wish to be cured, let us touch by faith the hem of Christ. But he who has touched Him is not hidden. Happy the man who has touched the extreme part of the Word. For who can comprehend the whole?

49. While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.

50. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51. And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.

54. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.

55. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat.

56. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 31. in Matt.) Our Lord conveniently waited until the death of the girl, that the miracle of her resurrection might be made public. For which reason also He goes slower, and speaks longer with the woman, that the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue may expire, and messengers come to tell Him. As it is said, *While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying unto him, Thy daughter is dead.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 28.) But since Matthew states the ruler of the synagogue to have told our Lord that his daughter was not on the point of death but quite dead, and Luke and Mark say, that she was not yet dead, nay, even go so far as to say that there came some afterwards, who told her death; we must examine, lest they should seem to be at variance. And we must understand that for the sake of brevity, Matthew chose rather to say, that our Lord was asked to do what it is obvious He did, namely, to raise the dead. For our Lord needs not the words of the father concerning his daughter, but what is more important, his wishes. Certainly, if the other two or any one of them had mentioned that the father had said what those who came from the house said, that Jesus need not be troubled because the maid was dead, His words which Matthew has related would seem to be at variance with his thoughts. But now to those who brought that message, and said that the Master need not come, it is not said that the father assented. The Lord therefore did not blame him as distrustful, but the more strongly confirms his belief. As it follows, *But when Jesus heard it, he answered the father of the girl, Believe only, &c.*

Athanasius. (Orat. in Pass. et Crucem. Dom. 4.) Our Lord requires faith from those who invoke Him, not because He needs the assistance of others, (for He is both the Lord and Giver of faith,) but not to seem to bestow His gifts according to His acceptance of persons, He shews that He favours those who believe, lest they should receive benefits without faith, and lose them by unbelief. For when He bestows a favour, He wishes it to last, and when He heals, the cure to remain undisturbed.

Theophylact. When He was about to raise the dead He put all out, as teaching us to be free from vain-glory, and to do nothing for show, for when any one ought to perform miracles, he must not be in the midst of a great many, but alone and apart from the other. As it follows, *And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John.* Now these only He permitted to enter as the Heads of His disciples, and able to conceal the miracle. For He did not wish to be revealed to many before His time, perhaps on account of the envy of the Jews. So also when any one envies us, we ought not to make known to him our righteousness, lest we give him an occasion of greater envy.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But He took not with Him His other disciples, so provoking them to a strange desire, because also they were not yet fully prepared, but He took Peter, and with him the sons of Zebedee, that the others also might imitate them. He took also the parents as witnesses, lest any should say the evidence of the resurrection was false. Luke adds to this also, that He shut out from the house those that were weeping, and shewed that they were unworthy of a sight of this kind. For it follows, *And they all wept, and bewailed her.* But if He then shut them out, much more now. For then it had not yet been revealed that death was turned into sleep. Let no one then hereafter despise himself, bringing an insult to the victory of Christ, whereby He has overcome death, and turned it into sleep. In proof of which it is added, *But he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth, &c.* shewing that all things were at His command, and that He would bring her to life as if He were awakening her from sleep. They yet nevertheless laughed Him to scorn. For it follows, *And they laughed him to scorn.* He did not reprove them nor put an end to their laughter, that laughter also might be a sign of death. For since generally, after a miracle has been performed men continue unfaithful, He takes them by their own words. But that He might by sight dispose to the belief of the resurrection, He takes the hand of the maid. As it follows, *But he took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise.* And when He had taken her by the hand, He awoke her. As it follows, *And her spirit returned, and she arose straightway.* For He poured not into her another soul, but restored the same which she had breathed forth. Nor does he only awake the maid, but orders her to take food. For it follows, *And he commanded to give her meat.* That it might not seem like a vision what was done. Nor did He Himself give to her, but He commanded others to do it. As also He said in the case of Lazarus, *Loose him.* (John 11:44.) And afterwards He made him partake of meat with Him.

Greek Expositor. (Severus.) He next charges the parents, astonished at the miracle, and almost crying out, not to publish abroad what was done. As it follows, *And her parents were astonished; but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done*; shewing that He is the Giver of good things, but not covetous of glory, and that He gives the whole, receiving nothing. But he who seeks after the glory of his works has indeed shewn forth something, but receives something.

Bede. But mystically, when the woman was cured of the issue of blood, word is brought that the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue is dead; because while the Church was cleansed from the stain of its sins, the Synagogue was forthwith destroyed by unbelief and envy; by unbelief indeed, in that it refused to believe in Christ; by envy, in that it was grieved that the Church had believed.

Ambrose. But still also were the servants of the ruler incredulous with regard to the resurrection, which Jesus had foretold in the Law, fulfilled in the Gospel; therefore say they, *Do not trouble him*; (Ps. 16.) as if it were impossible for Him to raise the dead.

Bede. Or this is even to this day said by those who see the state of the synagogue so destitute that they do not believe it can be restored, and therefore think nothing of praying for its resurrection. But those things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Therefore said the Lord to him, *Fear*

not, only believe, and she shall be made whole. (Luke 18:27.) The father of the girl is taken for the assembly of the doctors of the Law, which if it were willing to believe, the Synagogue also which is subject to it will be safe.

Ambrose. Therefore having entered into the house, He called a few to be judges of the coming resurrection: for the resurrection was not soon believed by the many. What then was the cause of this great difference? In a former case the widow's son is raised up before all, here a few only are set apart to judge. But I think that herein the mercy of the Lord is shewn, since the widowed mother of an only son suffered no delay. There is also the token of wisdom, that in the widow's son we should see the Church quick in believing; in the ruler of the synagogue's daughter, the Jews about indeed to believe, but out of a great many only a few. Lastly, when our Lord says, *She is not dead, but sleepeth*, they laughed Him to scorn. For whoever believes not, laughs. Let them therefore mourn their dead who think they are dead. Where there is a belief of the resurrection, the notion is not of death but of rest.

Bede. The Synagogue also, because it has lost the joy of the Bridegroom, whereby alone it can live. lying dead as it were among those that mourn, understands not even the reason why it weeps.

Ambrose. Now the Lord taking hold of the hand of the maid, cured her. Blessed is he whom wisdom takes by the hand, that she may bring him into her secret places, and command to be given him to eat. For the bread of heaven is the word of God. Hence comes also that wisdom which has filled its altars with the food of the body and blood of God. *Come,* she says, *eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mixed for you.* (Prov. 9:5.)

Bede. Now the maid arose straightway, because when Christ strengthens the hand, man revives from the death of the soul. For there are some, who only by the secret thought of sin are conscious of bringing death to themselves. The Lord signifying that such He brings to life again, raised the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. But others, by committing the very evil in which they delight, carry their dead as it were without the gates, and to shew that He raises these, He raised the widow's son without the gates. But some also, by habits of sin, bury themselves, as it were, and become corrupt; and to raise these also the grace of the Saviour is not wanting; to intimate which He raised from the dead Lazarus, who had been four days in the grave. But the deeper the death of the soul, so much the more intense should be the fervour of penitence. Hence He raises with a gentle voice the maid who lay dead in the room, the youth who was carried out He strengthens with many words, but to raise him who had been dead four days, He groaned in His spirit, He poured forth tears, and cried with a loud voice. But here also we must observe, that a public calamity needs a public remedy. Slight offences seek to be blotted out by secret penitence. The maid lying in the house rises again with few witnesses; the youth without the house is raised in the presence of a great crowd who accompanied him. Lazarus summoned from the tomb was known to many nations.

CHAP. 9

9:1–6

1. Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3. And he said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.

4. And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.

6. And they departed, and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel, and healing every where.

Cyril of Alexandria. It was fitting that those who were appointed the ministers of holy teaching should be able to work miracles, and by these very acts themselves be believed to be the ministers of God. Hence it is said, *Then called he his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils.* Herein He brings down the haughty pride of the devil, who once said, *There is none who shall open his mouth against me.* (Isai. 10:14.LXX.)

Eusebius. And that through them the whole race of mankind may be sought out, He not only gives them power to drive away evil spirits, but to cure all kind of diseases at His command; as it follows, *And to cure diseases.*

Cyril of Alexandria. (in Thesaur. l. 12. c. 14.) Mark here the divine power of the Son, which belongs not to a fleshly nature. For it was in the power of the saints to perform miracles not by nature, but by participation of the Holy Spirit; but it was altogether out of their power to grant this authority to others. For how could created natures possess dominion over the gifts of the Spirit? But our Lord Jesus Christ, as by nature God, imparts graces of this kind to whomsoever He will, not invoking upon them a power which is not His own, but infusing it into them from Himself.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 22. in Matt.) But after that they had been sufficiently strengthened by His guidance, and had received competent proofs of His power, He sends them out, as it follows, *And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God.* And here we must remark, that they are not commissioned to speak of sensible things as Moses and the Prophets; for they promised a land and earthly goods, but these a kingdom, and whatsoever is contained in it.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. ii. 69.) Now in sending His disciples to preach, our Lord enjoined many things on them, the chief of which are, that they should be so virtuous, so constant, so temperate, and, to speak briefly, so heavenly, that no less through their manner of living than their words, the teaching of the Gospel might be spread abroad. And therefore were they sent with lack of money, and staves, and a single garment; He accordingly adds, *And he said to them, Take nothing in the way, neither staves.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Many things indeed He ordained hereby; first indeed it rendered the disciples unsuspected; secondly, it held them aloof from all care, so that they might give their whole study to the word; thirdly, it taught them their own proper virtue. But perhaps some one will say that the other things indeed are reasonable, but for what reason did He command them to have no scrip on their way, nor two coats, nor staff? In truth, because He

wished to rouse them to all diligence, taking them away from all the cares of this life, that they might be occupied by the one single care of teaching.

Eusebius. Wishing then that they should be free from the desire of wealth and the anxieties of life, He gave this injunction. He took it as a proof of their faith and courage, that when it was commanded them to lead a life of extreme poverty, they would not escape from what was ordered. For it was fitting that they should make a kind of bargain, receiving these saving virtues to recompense them for obedience to commands. And when He was making them soldiers of God, He girds them for battle against their enemies, by telling them to embrace poverty. For no soldier of God entangles himself in the affairs of a secular life. (2 Tim. 2:4.)

Ambrose. Of what kind then he ought to be who preaches the Gospel of the kingdom of God is marked out by these Gospel precepts; that is, he must not require the supports of secular aid; and clinging wholly to faith, he must believe that the less he requires those things, the more they will be supplied to him.

Theophylact. For He sends them out as very beggars, so that He would have them neither carry bread, nor any thing else of which men are generally in want.

Augustine. (de Con. l. 2. c. 30.) Or, the Lord did not wish the disciples to possess and carry with them these things, not that they were not necessary to the support of this life, but because He sent them thus to shew that these things were due to them from those believers to whom they announced the Gospel, that so they might neither possess security, nor carry about with them the necessaries of this life, either great or little. He has therefore, according to Mark, excluded all except a staff, shewing that the faithful owe every thing to their ministers who require no superfluities. But this permission of the staff He has mentioned by name, when He says, *They should take nothing in the way, but a staff only.*

Ambrose. To those also who wish it, this place admits of being explained, so as to seem only to represent a spiritual temper of mind, which appears to have cast off as it were a certain covering of the body; not only rejecting power and despising wealth, but renouncing also the delights of the flesh itself.

Theophylact. Some also understand by the Apostles not carrying scrip, nor staff, nor two coats, that they must not lay up treasures, (which a scrip implies, collecting many things,) nor be angry and of a quarrelsome spirit, (which the staff signifies,) nor be false and of a double heart, (which is meant by the two coats.)

Cyril of Alexandria. (ut sup.) But it may be said, How then shall necessary things be prepared for them. He therefore adds, *And into whatsoever house ye enter, there abide, and thence depart.* As if He said, Let the food of disciples suffice you, who receiving from you spiritual things, will minister unto you temporal. But He ordered them to abide in one house, so as neither to incommode the host, (that is, so as to send him away,) nor themselves to incur the suspicion of gluttony and wantonness.

Ambrose. He pronounces it to be foreign to the character of a preacher of the heavenly kingdom to run from house to house and change the rights of inviolable hospitality; but as the grace of hospitality is supposed to be offered, so also if they are not received the dust must be shaken off, and they are commanded to depart from the city; as it follows, *And whosoever will not receive you when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony, &c.*

Bede. The dust is shaken off from the Apostles' feet as a testimony of their labours, that they entered into a city, and the apostolical preaching had reached to the inhabitants thereof. Or the dust is shaken off when they receive nothing (not even of the necessaries of life) from those who despised the Gospel.

Cyril of Alexandria. (ubi sup.) For it is very improbable that those who despise the saving Word, and the Master of the household, will shew themselves kind to His servants, and seek further blessings.

Ambrose. Or it is a great return of hospitality which is here taught, i. e. that we should not only wish peace to our hosts, but also if any faults of earthly infirmity obscure them, they should be removed by receiving the footsteps of apostolical preaching.

Bede. But if any by treacherous negligence, or even from zeal, despise the word of God, their communion must be shunned, the dust of the feet must be shaken off, lest by their vain deeds which are to be compared to the dust, the footstep of a chaste mind be defiled.

Eusebius. But when the Lord had girded His disciples as soldiers of God with divine virtue and wise admonitions, sending them to the Jews as teachers and physicians, they afterwards went forth, as it follows, *And they departed, and went through the towns preaching the gospel, and healing every where.*

9:7–9

7. Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8. And of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9. And Herod said, John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? And he desired to see him.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 48. in Matt.) It was not till a long time had passed that Herod took notice of the things that were done by Jesus, (to shew you the pride of a tyrant,) for he did not acknowledge them at first, as it is said, *Now Herod heard, &c.*

Theophylact. Herod was the son of Herod the Great who slew the children, who was king, but this Herod was tetrarch. He inquired about Christ, who He was. Hence it follows, *And he was perplexed.*

Chrysostom. For sinners fear both when they know, and when they are ignorant; they are afraid of shadows, are suspicious about every thing, and are alarmed at the slightest noise. Such in truth is sin; when no one blames or finds fault, it betrays a man, when no one accuses it condemns, and makes the offender timid and backward. But the cause of fear is stated afterwards, in the words, *Because that it was said of some.*

Theophylact. For the Jews expected a resurrection of the dead to a fleshly life, eating and drinking, but those that rise again will not be concerned with the deeds of the flesh.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) When Herod then heard of the miracles which Jesus was performing, he says, *John have I beheaded*, which was not an expression of boasting, but by way of allaying his fears, and bringing his distracted soul to recollect that he had killed. And because he had beheaded John, he adds, *but who is this*.

Theophylact. If John is alive and has risen from the dead, I shall know him when I see him; as it follows, *And he sought to see him.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. 2. c. 45.) Now Luke, though he keeps the same order in his narrative with Mark, does not oblige us to believe that the course of events was the same. In these words too, Mark testifies only to the fact that others (not Herod) said that John had risen from the dead, but since Luke has mentioned Herod's perplexity, we must suppose either that after that perplexity, he confirmed in his own mind what was said by others, since he says to his servants, (as Matthew relates,) *This is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead*, or these words of Matthew must have been uttered so as to signify that he was still doubting.

9:10–17

10. And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.

11. And the people, when they knew it, followed him: and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

12. And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place.

13. But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14. For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company.

15. And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16. Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. 1. 2. c. 45.) Matthew and Mark, taking occasion from what had occurred above, relate here how John was slain by Herod. But Luke, who had long before given an account of John's sufferings, after mentioning that perplexity of Herod's, as to who our Lord was, immediately adds, *And the apostles when they were returned told him all that they had done.*

Bede. But they not only tell Him what they had done and taught, but also, as Matthew implies, the things which John suffered while they were occupied in teaching, are now repeated to Him either by His own, or, according to Matthew, by John's disciples. (Matt. 14:12.)

Isidore of Peleusium. (l. I. ep. 233.) Our Lord because He hates the men of blood, and those that dwell with them, as long as they depart not from their crimes, after the murder of the Baptist left the murderers and departed; as it follows, *And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida.*

Bede. Now Bethsaida is in Galilee, the city of the Apostles Andrew, Peter, and Philip, near the lake of Gennesaret. Our Lord did not this from fear of death, (as some think,) but to spare His enemies, lest they should commit two murders, waiting also for the proper time for His own sufferings.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 49. in Matt.) Now He did not depart before, but after it was told Him what had happened, manifesting in each particular the reality of His incarnation.

Theophylact. But our Lord went into a desert place because He was about to perform the miracle of the loaves of bread, that no one should say that the bread was brought from the neighbouring cities.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Or He went into a desert place that no one might follow Him. But the people did not retire, but accompanied Him, as it follows, *And the people when they knew it, followed him.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Some indeed asking to be delivered from evil spirits, but others desiring of Him the removal of their diseases; those also who were delighted with His teaching attended Him diligently.

Bede. But He as the powerful and merciful Saviour by receiving the weary, by teaching the ignorant, curing the sick, filling the hungry, implies how He was pleased with their devotion; as it follows, *And he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, &c.*

Theophylact. That you may learn that the wisdom which is in us is distributed into word and work, and that it becomes us to speak of what has been done, and to do what we speak of. But when the day was wearing away, the disciples now beginning to have a care of others take compassion on the multitude.

Cyril of Alexandria. For, as has been said, they sought to be healed of different diseases, and because the disciples saw that what they sought might be accomplished by His simple assent, they say, Send them away, that they be no more distressed. But mark the overflowing kindness of Him who is asked. He not only grants those things which the disciples seek, but to those who follow Him, He supplies the bounty of a munificent hand, commanding food to be set before them; as it follows, *But he said unto them, Give ye them to eat.*

Theophylact. Now He said not this as ignorant of their answer, but wishing to induce them to tell Him how much bread they had, that so a great miracle might be manifested through their confession, when the quantity of bread was made known.

Cyril of Alexandria. But this was a command which the disciples were unable to comply with, since they had with them but five loaves and two fishes. As it follows, *And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we go and buy meat for all this people.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 46.) In these words indeed Luke has strung together in one sentence the answer of Philip, saying, *Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, but that every one may have a little,* (John 6:9.) and the answer of Andrew, *There is a lad here who has five loaves and two small fishes*, as John relates. For when Luke says, *We have no more but five loaves and two fishes*, he refers to the answer of Andrew. But that which he added, *Except we go and buy food for all the people*, seems to belong to Philip's answer, save that he is silent about *the two hundred pennyworth*, although this may be implied also in the expression of Andrew himself. For when he had said, *There is a lad here who has five loaves and two fishes*, he added, *But what are these among so many?* that is to say, *unless we go and buy meat for all this people*. From which diversity of words, but harmony of things and opinions, it is sufficiently evident that we have this wholesome lesson given us, that we must seek for nothing in words but the meaning of the speaker; and to explain this clearly, ought to be the care of all truthtelling authors whenever they relate any thing concerning man, or angel, or God.

Cyril of Alexandria. But that the difficulty of the miracle may be still more enhanced, the number of men is stated to have been by no means small. As it follows, *And there were about five thousand men, besides women and children,* (Mat. 14:21.) as another Evangelist relates.

Theophylact. Our Lord teaches us, that when we entertain any one, we ought to make him sit down at meat, and partake of every comfort. Hence it follows, *And he said to his disciples, &c.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) That Luke says here, that the men were ordered to sit down by fifties, but Mark, by fifties and hundreds, does not matter, seeing that one spoke of a part, the other of the whole. But if one had mentioned only the fifties, and the other only the hundreds, they would seem to be greatly opposed to one another; nor would it be sufficiently distinct which of the two was said. But who will not admit, that one was mentioned by one Evangelist, the other by another, and that if more attentively considered it must be found so. But I have said thus much, because often certain things of this kind exist, which to those who take little heed and judge hastily appear contrary to one another, and yet are not so.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 49. in Matt.) And to make men believe that He came from the Father, Christ when He was about to work the miracle looked up to heaven. As it follows, *Then he took the five loaves, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. This also He did purposely for our sakes, that we may learn that at the commencement of a feast when we are going to break bread, we ought to offer thanks for it to God, and to draw forth the heavenly blessing upon it. As it follows, *And he blessed, and brake.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) He distributes to them by the hands of His disciples, so honouring them that they might not forget it when the miracle was past. Now He did not create food for the multitude out of what did not exist, that He might stop the mouth of the Manichæans, who say that the creatures are independent (ἀλλοτριούντων. κτίσιν.) of Him; shewing that He Himself is both the Giver of food, and the same who said, *Let the earth bring forth, &c.*He makes also the fishes to increase, to signify that He has dominion over the seas, as well as the dry land. But well did He perform a special miracle for the weak, at the same time that He gives also a general blessing in feeding all the strong as well as the weak. *And they did all eat, and were filled.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. Catech. Mag. c. 23.) For whom neither the heaven rained manna, nor the earth brought forth corn according to its nature, but from the unspeakable garner of divine power the blessing was poured forth. The bread is supplied in the hands of those who serve, it is even increased through the fulness of those who eat. The sea supplied not their wants with the food of fishes, but He who placed in the sea the race of fishes.

Ambrose. It is clear that the multitude were filled not by a scanty meal, but by a constant and increasing supply of food. You might see in an incomprehensible manner amid the hands of those who distributed, the particles multiplying which they broke not; the fragments too, untouched by the fingers of the breakers, spontaneously mounting up.

Cyril of Alexandria. Nor was this all that the miracle came to; but it follows, *And there was taken up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets*, that this might be a manifest proof that a work of love to our neighbour will claim a rich reward from God.

Theophylact. And that we might learn the value of hospitality, and how much our own store is increased when we help those that need.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But He caused not loaves to remain over, but fragments, that He might shew them to be the remnants of the loaves, and these were made to be of that number, that there might be as many baskets as disciples.

Ambrose. After that she who received the type of the Church was cured of the issue of blood, and that the Apostles were appointed to preach the Gospel of the kingdom of God, the nourishment of heavenly grace is imparted. But mark to whom it is imparted. Not to the indolent, not to those in a city, of rank in the synagogue, or in high secular office, but to those who seek Christ in the desert.

Bede. Who Himself having left Judæa, which by unbelief had bereft herself of the source of prophecy, in the desert of the Church which had no husband, dispenses the food of the word. But many companies of the faithful leaving the city of their former manner of life, and their various opinions, follow Christ into the deserts of the Gentiles.

Ambrose. But they who are not proud are themselves received by Christ, and the Word of God speaks with them, not about worldly things, but of the kingdom of God. And if any have ulcers of bodily passions, to these He willingly affords His cure. But every where the order of the mystery is preserved, that first through the remission of sins the wounds should be healed, but afterwards the nourishment of the heavenly table should plentifully abound.

Bede. Now when the day was going down, he refreshes the multitudes, that is, as the end of the world approaches, or when the Sun of righteousness sets for us.

Ambrose. Although the multitude is not as yet fed with stronger food. For first, as milk, there are five loaves; secondly, seven; thirdly, the Body of Christ is the stronger food. But if any one fears to seek food, let him leave every thing that belongs to him, and listen to the word of God. But whoever begins to hear the word of God begins to hunger, the Apostles begin to see him hungering. And if they who eat, as yet know not what they eat, Christ knows; He knows that they eat not this world's food, but the food of Christ. For they did not as yet know that the food of a believing people was not to be bought and sold. Christ knew that we are rather to be bought with a ransom, but His banquet to be without price.

Bede. The Apostles had only got but the five loaves of the Mosaic law, and the two fishes of each covenant, which were covered in the secret place of obscure mysteries, as in the waters of the deep. But because men have five external senses, the five thousand men who followed the Lord signify those who still live in worldly ways, knowing well how to use the external things they possess. For they who entirely renounce the world are raised aloft in the enjoyment of His Gospel feast. But the different divisions of the guests, indicate the different congregations of Churches throughout the world, which together compose the one Catholic.

Ambrose. But here the bread which Jesus brake is mystically indeed the word of God, and discourse concerning Christ, which when it is divided is increased. For from these few words, He ministered abundant nourishment to the people. He gave us words like loaves, which while they are tasted by our mouth are doubled.

Bede. Now our Saviour does not create new food for the hungry multitudes, but He took those things which the disciples had and blessed them, since coming in the flesh He preaches nothing else than what had been foretold, but demonstrates the words of prophecy to be pregnant with the mysteries of grace; He looks towards heaven, that thither He may teach us to direct the eye of the mind, there to seek the light of knowledge; He breaks and distributes to the disciples to be placed before the multitude, because He revealed to them the Sacraments of the Law and the Prophets that they might preach them to the world.

Ambrose.; Not without meaning are the fragments which remained over and above what the multitudes had eaten, collected by the disciples, since those things which are divine you may more easily find among the elect than among the people. Blessed is he who can collect those which remain over and above even to the learned. But for what reason did Christ fill twelve baskets, except that He might solve that word concerning the Jewish people, *His hands served in the basket?* (Ps. 81:6.) that is, the people who before collected mud for the pots, now through the cross of Christ gather up the nourishment of the heavenly life. Nor is this the office of few, but all. For by the twelve baskets, as if of each of the tribes, the foundation of the faith is spread abroad.

Bede. Or by the twelve baskets the twelve Apostles are figured, and all succeeding teachers, despised indeed by men without, but within loaded with the fragments of saving food.

9:18–22

18. And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?

19. They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old prophets is risen again.

20. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God.

21. And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

22. Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

Cyril of Alexandria. Our Lord having retired from the multitude, and being in a place apart, was engaged in prayer. As it is said, *And it came to pass, as he was alone praying*. For He ordained Himself as an example of this, instructing His disciples by an easy method of teaching. For I suppose the rulers of the people ought to be superior also in good deeds, to those that are under them, ever holding converse with them in all necessary things, and treating of those things in which God delights.

Bede. Now the disciples were with the Lord, but He alone prayed to the Father, since the saints may be joined to the Lord in the bond of faith and love, but the Son alone is able to penetrate the incomprehensible secrets of the Father's will. Every where then He prays alone, for human wishes comprehend not the counsel of God, nor can any one be a partaker with Christ of the deep things of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now His engaging in prayer might perplex His disciples. For they saw Him praying like a man, Whom before they had seen performing miracles with divine power. In order then to banish all perplexity of this kind, He asks them this question, not because He did not know the reports which they had gathered from without, but that He might rid them of the opinion of the many, and instil into them the true faith. Hence it follows, *And he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?*

Bede. Rightly does our Lord, when about to enquire into the faith of the disciples, first inquire into the opinion of the multitudes, lest their confession should appear not to be determined by their knowledge, but to be formed by the opinion of the generality, and they should be considered not to believe from experience, but like Herod to be perplexed by different reports which they heard.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 53.) Now it may raise a question, that Luke says that our Lord asked His disciples, *Whom do men say that I am*, at the same time that He was alone praying, and they also were with Him; whereas Mark says, that they were asked this question by our Lord on the way; but this is difficult only to him who never prayed on the way.

Ambrose. But it is no trifling opinion of the multitude which the disciples mention, when it is added, *But they answering said, John the Baptist*, (whom they knew to be beheaded;) but some say, Elias, (whom they thought would come,) but others say that one of the old Prophets is risen again. But to make this enquiry belongs to a different kind of wisdom from ours, for if it were enough for the Apostle Paul to know nothing but Christ Jesus, and Him crucified, what more can I desire to know than Christ? (1 Cor. 2:2.)

Cyril of Alexandria. But mark the subtle skill of the question. For he directs them first to the praises of strangers, that having overthrown these, He might beget in them the right opinion. So when the disciples had given the opinion of the people, He asks them their own opinion; as it is added, *And He said unto them, Whom say ye that I am?* How marked is *ye*! He excludes them from the other, that they may avoid their opinions; as if He said, Ye who by my decree are called to the Apostleship, the witnesses of my miracles, whom do ye say that I am? But Peter anticipated the rest, and becomes the mouthpiece of the whole company, and launching forth into the eloquence of divine love, utters the confession of faith, as it is added, *Peter answering said, The Christ of God*. He says not merely that He was Christ of God, but now He uses the article. Hence it is in the Greek, τὸν χριστόν. For many divinely accounted persons are in diverse ways called Christs, for some were anointed kings, some prophets. But we through Christ have been anointed

by the holy Spirit, have obtained the name of Christ. But there is only one who is the Christ of God and the Father, He alone as it were having His own Father who is in heaven. And so Luke agrees indeed in the same opinion as Matthew, who relates Peter to have said, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*, but speaking briefly Luke says that Peter answered, *the Christ of God*.

Ambrose. In this one name there is the expression both of His divinity and incarnation, and the belief of His passion. He has therefore comprehended every thing, having expressed both the nature and the name wherein is all virtue. (summa virtutum)

Cyril of Alexandria. But we must observe, that Peter most wisely confessed Christ to be one, against those who presumed to divide Immanuel into two Christs. For Christ did not enquire of them, saying, *Whom do men say the divine Word is?* but the *Son of man*, whom Peter confessed to be the Son of God. Herein then is Peter to be admired, and thought worthy of such chief honour, seeing that Him whom he marvelled at in our form, he believed to be the Christ of the Father, that is to say, that the Word which proceeded of the Father's Substance was become man.

Ambrose. But our Lord Jesus Christ was at first unwilling to be preached, lest an uproar should arise; as it follows, *And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man any thing*. For many reasons He commands His disciples to be silent; to deceive the prince of this world, to reject boasting, to teach humility. Christ then would not boast and dost thou boast who art of ignoble birth? Likewise He did it to prevent rude and as yet imperfect disciples from being oppressed with the wonder of this awful announcement. They are then forbid to preach Him as the Son of God, that they might afterwards preach Him crucified.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 54. in Matt.) Timely also was our Lord's command that no one should tell that He was Christ, in order that when offences should be taken away and the sufferings of the cross completed, a proper opinion of Him might be firmly rooted in the minds of the hearers. For that which has once taken root and afterwards been torn up. when fresh planted will scarcely ever be preserved. But that which when once planted continues undisturbed, grows up securely. For if Peter was offended merely by what he heard, what would be the feelings of those many who, after they had heard that He was the Son of God, saw Him crucified, and spit upon?

Cyril of Alexandria. It was the duty then of the disciples to preach Him throughout the world. For this was the work of those who were chosen by Him to the office of the Apostleship. But as holy Scripture bears witness, *There is a time for every thing*. For it was fitting that the cross and resurrection should be accomplished, and then should follow the preaching of the Apostles; as it is spoken, saying, *The Son of man must needs suffer many things*.

Ambrose. Perhaps because the Lord knew that the disciples would believe even the difficult mystery of the Passion and Resurrection, He wished to be Himself the proclaimer of His own Passion and Resurrection.

23. And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

27. But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. (non occ.) Great and noble leaders provoke the mighty in arms to deeds of valour, not only by promising them the honours of victory, but by declaring that suffering is in itself glorious. Such we see is the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. For He had foretold to His disciples, that He must needs suffer the accusations of the Jews, be slain, and rise again on the third day. Lest then they should think that Christ indeed was to suffer persecution for the life of the world, but that they might lead a soft life, He shews them that they must needs pass through similar struggles, if they desired to obtain His glory. Hence it is said, *And he said unto all.*

Bede. He rightly addressed Himself to all, since He treats of the higher things (which relate to the belief in His birth and passion) apart with His disciples.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 55. in Matt.) Now the Saviour of His great mercy and lovingkindness will have no one serve Him unwillingly and from constraint, but those only who come of their own accord, and are grateful for being allowed to serve Him. And so not by compelling men and putting a yoke upon them, but by persuasion and kindness, He draws unto Him every where those who are willing, saying, *If any man will, &c.*

Basil. (in Cons. Mon. cap. 4.) But He has left His own life for an example of blameless conversation to those who are willing to obey Him; as He says, *Come after me*, meaning thereby not a following of His body, for that would be impossible to all, since our Lord is in heaven, but a due imitation of His life according to their capacities.

Bede. Now unless a man renounces himself, he comes not near to Him, who is above him; it is said therefore, *Let him deny himself.*

Basil. (in reg. fus. int. 6.) A denial of one's self is indeed a total forgetfulness of things past, and a forsaking of his own will and affection.

Origen. (in Matt. tom. 12.) A man also denies himself when by a sufficient alteration of manners or a good conversation he changes a life of habitual wickedness. He who has long lived in lasciviousness, abandons his lustful self when he becomes chaste, and in like manner a forsaking of any crimes is a denial of one's self.

Basil. (ubi sup.) Now a desire of suffering death for Christ and a mortification of one's members which are upon the earth, and a manful resolution to undergo any danger for Christ, and an indifference towards the present life, this it is to take up one's cross. Hence it is added, *And let him take up his cross daily.*

Theophylact. By *the cross*, He speaks of an ignominious death, meaning, that if any one will follow Christ, he must not for his own sake flee from even an ignominious death.

Gregory. (Hom. 32. in Ev) In two ways also is the cross taken up, either when the body is afflicted through abstinence, or the mind; touched by sympathy.

Greek Expositor. (Isaac. Monac.) He rightly joins these two, *Let him deny himself, and let him take up his cross*, for as he who is prepared to ascend the cross conceives in his mind the intention of death, and so goes on thinking to have no more part in this life, so he who is willing to follow our Lord, ought first to deny himself, *and so take up his cross*, that his will may be ready to endure every calamity.

Basil. (ubi sup. Int. 8.) Herein then stands a man's perfection, that he should have his affections hardened, even towards life itself, and have ever about him the answer (ἀποκρίμα.) of death [a], that he should by no means trust in himself. (2 Cor. 1:9.) But perfection takes its beginning from the relinquishment of things foreign to it; suppose these to be possessions or vain-glory, or affection for things that profit not.

Bede. We are bid then to take up the cross of which we have above spoken, and having taken it, to follow our Lord who bore His own cross. Hence it follows, *And let him follow me.*

Origen. (ut sup.) He assigns the cause of this when He adds, *For whosoever will save his life shall lose it*; that is, whosoever will according to the present life keep his own soul fixed on things of sense, the same shall lose it, never reaching to the bounds of happiness. But on the other hand He adds, *but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake, shall save it.* That is, whosoever forsakes the things of sense looking upon truth, and exposes himself to death, as it were losing his life for Christ, shall the rather save it. If then it is a blessed thing to save our life, (with regard to that safety which is in God,) there must be also a certain good surrender of life which is made by looking upon Christ. It seems also to me from resemblance to that denying of one's self which has been before spoken of, that it becomes us to lose a certain sinful life of ours, to take up that which is saved by virtue.

Cyril of Alexandria. (non occ.) But that incomparable exercise of the passion of Christ, which surpasses the delights and precious things of the world, is alluded to when he adds, *What is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself, or be a cast away?* As if he says, When a man, through his looking after the present delights, gains pleasure, and refuses indeed to suffer, but chooses to live splendidly in his riches, what advantage will he get then, when he has lost his soul? For the fashion of this world passeth away, and pleasant things depart as a shadow. (1 Cor. 7:31. Sap. 5:9.) For the treasures of ungodliness shall not profit, but righteousness snatches a man from death. (Prov. 10:2.)

Gregory. (Hom. 32. in Ev.) Since then the holy Church has one time of persecution, another time of peace, our Lord has noticed both times in His command to us. For at the time of persecution we must lay down our soul, that is our life, which He signified, saying, *Whosoever shall lose his life.* But in time of peace, those things which have the greatest power to subdue us, our earthly desires, must be vanquished; which He signified, saying, *What does it profit a man, &c.* Now we commonly despise all fleeting things, but still we are so checked by that feeling of shame so common to man, that we

are yet unable to express in words the uprightness which we preserve in our hearts. But to this wound the Lord indeed subjoins a suitable application, saying, *For whoever shall be ashamed of me and my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed.*

Theophylact. He is ashamed of Christ who says, Am I to believe on Him that is crucified? He also is ashamed of His words who despises the simplicity of the Gospel. But of him shall the Lord be ashamed in His kingdom, in the same manner as if a master of a household should have a bad servant, and be ashamed to have him.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now he strikes fear into their hearts, when He says that He will descend from heaven, not in His former humility and condition proportioned to our capacities for receiving Him, but in the glory of the Father, with the Angels ministering unto Him. For it follows, *When he shall come in his own glory, and his Father's, and of the holy angels.* Awful then and fatal will it be, to be branded as an enemy, and slothful in business, when so great a Judge shall descend with the armies of Angels standing round Him. But from this you may perceive, that though He has taken to Himself our flesh and blood, the Son is no less God, seeing that He promises to come in the glory of God the Father, and that Angels shall minister to Him as the Judge of all, Who was made man like unto us.

Ambrose. Now our Lord while He ever raises us to look to the future reward of virtue, and teaches us how good it is to despise worldly things, so also He supports the weakness of the human mind by a present recompense. For it is a hard thing to take up the cross, and expose your life to danger and your body to death; to give up what you are, when you wish to be what you are not; and even the loftiest virtue seldom exchanges things present for future. The good Master then, lest any man should be broken down by despair or weariness, straightway promises that He will be seen by the faithful, in these words, *But I say unto you, There are some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.*

Theophylact. That is, the glory in which the righteous shall be. Now He said this of His transfiguration, which was the type of the glory to come; as if He said, There are some standing here, Peter, James, and John, who shall not reach death before they have seen at the time of My transfiguration what will be the glory of those who confess Me.

Gregory. (Hom. 32. in Ev.) Or, by the kingdom of God in this place, is meant the present Church; and some of His disciples were to live in the body up to that time, when they should behold the Church of God built and raised up against the glory of the world.

Ambrose. If then we also wish not to fear death, let us stand where Christ is. For they only cannot taste death who are able to stand with Christ, wherein we may consider from the nature of the very word, that they will not experience even the slightest perception of death, who are thought worthy to obtain union with Christ. At least let us suppose that the death of the body is tasted by touch, the life of the soul preserved by possession; for here not the death of the body, but of the soul, is denied.

9:28–31

28. And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.

29. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.

30. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias:

31. Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Eusebius. Our Lord, when He made known to His disciples the great mystery of His second coming, that it might not seem that they were to believe in His words only, proceeds to works, manifesting to them, through the eyes of their faith, the image of His kingdom; as it follows, *And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray.*

Damascene. (Orat. de Trans fig. §. 8.) Matthew and Mark indeed say that the transfiguration took place on the sixth day after the promise made to the disciples, but Luke on the eighth. But there is no disagreement in these testimonies, but they who make the number six, taking off a day at each end, that is, the first and the last, the day on which He makes the promise, and that on which He fulfilled it, have reckoned only the intervening ones, but He who makes the number eight, has counted in each of the two days above mentioned. But why were not all called, but only some, to behold the sight? There was only one indeed who was unworthy to see the divinity, namely Judas, according to the word of Isaiah, *Let the wicked be taken away, that he should not behold the glory of God.* (Isai. 26:10 LXX.) If then he alone had been sent away, he might have, as it were from envy, been provoked to greater wickedness. Henceforward He takes away from the traitor every pretext for his treachery, seeing that He left below the rest of the company of the Apostles. But He took with Him three, that in the mouths of two or three witnesses every word should be established. He took Peter, indeed, because He wished to shew him that the witness he had borne to Him was confirmed by the witness of the Father, and that he was as it were to preside over the whole Church. He took with Him James, who was to be the first of all the disciples to die for Christ; but He took John as the clearest singer of the sacred doctrine, that having seen the glory of the Son, which submits not to time, he might sound forth, *In the beginning was the Word.* (John 1:1.)

Ambrose. Or, Peter went up, who received the keys of the kingdom of heaven; John, to whom was committed our Lord's mother; James, who first suffered martyrdom. (Acts 12:1.)

Theophylact. Or, He takes these with Him as men who were able to conceal this thing, and reveal it to no one else. But going up into a mountain to pray, He teaches us to pray solitary, and going up, into stooping to earthly things.

Damascene. (ut sup. 10.) Servants however pray in one way; our Lord prayed in another. For the prayer of the servant is offered up by the lifting up of the mind to God, but the holy mind of Christ, (who was hypostatically [ὑπόστασιν] united to God,) prayed, that He might lead us by the hand to the ascent, whereby we mount up in prayer to God, and teach us that He is not opposed to God, but reverences the Father as His beginning; (ὡς ἀρχὴν ἑαυτὸν) nay, even tempting the tyrant, who sought from Him whether He were God, (which the power of His miracles declared,) He concealed as it were under the bait a hook; that he who had deceived man with the hope of divinity might fitly himself be caught with the clothing of humanity. Prayer is the revelation of Divine glory; as it follows, *And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Not as though His body changed its human form, but a certain glistening glory overspread it.

Damascene. (ut sup. 13.) Now the devil, seeing His face shining in prayer, recollected Moses, whose face was glorified. But Moses indeed was arrayed with a glory, which came from without; our Lord, with that which proceeded from the inherent brightness of Divine glory. (Exod. 34:29.) For since in the hypostatical union there is one and the same glory of the Word and the flesh, He is transfigured not as receiving what He was not, but manifesting to His disciples, what He was. Hence, according to Matthew, it is said, that He was transfigured before them, and that His face shone as the sun; (Mat. 17:2.) for what the sun is in things of sense, God is in spiritual things. And as the sun, which is the fountain of light, cannot be easily seen, but its light is perceived from that which reaches the earth; so the countenance of Christ shines more intensely, like the sun, but His raiment is white as snow; as it follows, *And his raiment was white and glistering*; that is, lighted up by its participation of the divine light. And a little afterwards, But while these things were so, that it might be shewn there was but one Lord of the new and old covenant, and the mouths of heretics might be shut, and men might believe on the resurrection, and He also, who was transfigured, be believed to be the Lord of the living and the dead, Moses and Elias, as servants, stand by their Lord in His glory; hence it follows, *And behold there talked with him two men.* For it became men, seeing the glory and confidence of their fellow servants, to admire indeed the merciful condescension of the Lord, but to emulate those who had laboured before them, and looking to the pleasantness of future blessings, to be the more strengthened for conflicts. For he who has known the reward of his labours, will the more easily endure them.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 56. in Matt.) Or else this took place because the multitude said He was Elias or Jeremias, to shew the distinction between our Lord and His servants. And to make it plain that He was not an enemy of God, and transgressor of the law, He shewed these two standing by Him; (for else, Moses the lawgiver, and Elias who was zealous for the glory of God, had not stood by Him,) but also to give testimony to the virtues of the men. For each had ofttimes exposed Himself to death in keeping the divine commands. He wishes also His disciples to imitate them in the government of the people, that they might be indeed meek like Moses, and zealous like Elias. He introduces them also to set forth the glory of His cross, to console Peter and the others who feared His Passion. Hence it follows, *And spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.*

Cyril of Alexandria. The mystery, namely, of His incarnation, also the life-giving Passion accomplished on the sacred cross.

Ambrose. Now in a mystical manner, after the words above said, is exhibited the transfiguration of Christ, since he who hears the words of Christ, and believes, shall see the glory of His resurrection. For, on the eighth day the resurrection took place. Hence also several Psalms are written, 'for the eighth,' (pro octava.) or perhaps it was that He might make manifest what He had said, *that he who for the word of God shall lose his own life, shall save it*, seeing that He will make good His promises at the resurrection.

Bede. For as He rose from the dead after the seventh day of the Sabbath, during which He lay in the tomb, we also after the six ages of this world, and the seventh of the rest of souls, which meanwhile is passed in another life, shall rise again as it were in the eighth age.

Ambrose. But Matthew and Mark have related that He took them with Him after six days, of which we may say after 6000 years, (for a thousand years in the Lord's sight are as one day;) but more than 6000 years are reckoned. We had rather then take the six days symbolically, that in six days the works of the world were completed, that by the time we may understand the works, by the works the world. And so the times of the world being finished, the resurrection to come is declared; or because, He who has ascended above the world, and has passed beyond the moments of this life, is waiting, seated as it were on a high place, for the everlasting fruit of the resurrection.

Bede. Hence He ascends the mountain to pray and be transfigured, to shew that those who expect the fruit of the resurrection, and desire to see the King in His glory, ought to have the dwelling place of their hearts on high, and be ever on their knees in prayer.

Ambrose. I should think that in the three who are taken up into the mountain, was contained in a mystery the human race, because from the three sons of Noah sprung the whole race of man; I did not perceive that they were chosen out. Three then are chosen to ascend the mountain, because none can see the glory of the resurrection, but they who have preserved the mystery of the Trinity with inviolable purity of faith.

Bede. Now the transfigured Saviour shews the glory of His own coming, or our resurrection; who as He then appeared to His Apostles shall in like manner appear to all the elect. But the raiment of the Lord is taken for the band of His Saints, which in truth when our Lord was upon earth seemed to be despised, but when He sought the mount, shines with a new whiteness; for *now are we the sons of God; and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.* (1 John 3:2.)

Ambrose. Or else, according to your capacity is the word either lessened or increased to you, and unless you ascend the summit of a higher wisdom, you behold not what glory there is in the word of God. Now the garments of the Word, are the discourses of the Scriptures, and certain clothings of the Divine mind; and as His raiment shone white, so in the eyes of your understanding, the sense of the divine words becomes clear. Hence after Moses, Elias; that is, the Law and the Prophets in the Word. For neither can the Law exist without the Word, nor the Prophet, unless he prophesied of the Son of God.

9:32–36

32. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

34. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.

36. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

Theophylact. While Christ is engaged in prayer, Peter is heavy with sleep, for he was weak, and did what was natural to man; as it is said, *But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep.* But when they awake, they behold His glory, and the two men with Him; as it follows, *And when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men, that stood with him.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 56. in Matt.) Or, by the word sleep, he means that strange maze that fell upon them by reason of the vision. For it was not night time, but the exceeding brightness of the light weighed down their weak eyes.

Ambrose. For the incomprehensible brightness of the Divine nature oppresses our bodily senses. For if the sight of the body is unable to contain the sun's ray when opposite to the eyes which behold it, how can the corruption of our fleshly members endure the glory of God? And perhaps they were oppressed with sleep, that after their rest they might behold the sight of the resurrection. Therefore when they were awake they saw His glory. For no one, except he is watching, sees the glory of Christ. Peter was delighted, and as the allurements of this world enticed him not, was carried away by the glory of the resurrection. Hence it follows, *And it came to pass as they departed, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For perhaps holy Peter imagined that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, and therefore it seemed good to him to abide on the mount.

Damascene. (Orat. de Trans. fig.) It were not good for thee, Peter, that Christ should abide there, for if He had remained, the promise made to thee would never receive its accomplishment. For neither wouldest thou have obtained the keys of the kingdom, nor the tyranny of death been abolished. Seek not bliss before its time, as Adam did to be made a God. The time shall come when thou shalt enjoy the sight without ceasing, and dwell together with Him who is light and life.

Ambrose. But Peter distinguished not only by earnest feeling, but also by devout deeds, wishing like a zealous workman to build three tabernacles, offers the service of their united labour; for it follows, *Let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, &c.*

Damascene. (ubi sup.) But the Lord ordained thee not the builder of tabernacles, but of the universal Church. Thy words have been brought to pass by thy disciples, by thy sheep, in building a tabernacle, not only for Christ, but also for His servants. But Peter said not this deliberately, but through the inspiration of the Spirit revealing things to come, as it follows, *not knowing what he said.*

Cyril of Alexandria. He knew not what he said, for neither was the time come for the end of the world, or for the Saints' enjoyment of their promised hope. And when the dispensation was now commencing, how was it fitting that Christ should abandon His love of the world, Who was willing to suffer for it?

Damascene. (ubi sup.) It behoved Him also not to confine the fruit of His incarnation to the service of those only who were on the mount, but to extend it to all believers, which was to be accomplished by His cross and passion.

Titus Bostrensis. (non occ.) Peter also was ignorant what he said, seeing that it was not proper to make three tabernacles for the three. For the servants are not received with their Lord, the creature is not placed beside the Creator.

Ambrose. Nor does the condition of man in this corruptible body allow of making a tabernacle to God, whether in the soul or in the body, or in any other place; and although he knew not what he said, yet a service was offered which not by any deliberate forwardness, but its premature devotion, receives in abundance the fruits of piety. For his ignorance was part of his condition, his offer of devotion.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Or else Peter heard that it was necessary Christ must die, and on the third day rise again, but he saw around him a very remote and solitary place; he supposed therefore that the place had some great protection. For this reason he said, *It is good for us to be here.* (Exod. 24:15, 2 Kings 1:12.) Moses, too was present, who entered into the cloud. Elias, who on the mount brought down fire from heaven. The Evangelist then, to indicate the confusion of mind in which he utters this, added, *Not knowing what he said.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 56.) Now in what Luke here says of Moses and Elias, *And it came to pass as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here*, he must not be thought contrary to Matthew and Mark, who have so connected Peter's suggestion of this, as if Moses and Elias were still speaking with our Lord. For they did not expressly state that Peter said it then, but rather were silent about what Luke added, that *as they departed*, Peter suggested this to our Lord.

Theophylact. But while Peter spake, our Lord builds a tabernacle not made with hands, and enters into it with the Prophets. Hence it is added, *While he thus spake there came a cloud and overshadowed them*, to shew that He was not inferior to the Father. For as in the Old Testament it was said, the Lord dwelt in the cloud, so now also a cloud received our Lord, not a dark cloud, but bright and shining.

Basil. (in Esai. c. 4. 5.) For the obscurity of the Law had passed away; for as smoke is caused by the fire, so the cloud by light; but because a cloud is the sign of calmness, the rest of the future state is signified by the covering of a cloud.

Ambrose. For it is the overshadowing of the divine Spirit which does not darken, but reveals secret things to the hearts of men.

Origen. (in Matt. tom. 12.) Now His disciples being unable to bear this, fell down, humbled under the mighty hand of God, greatly afraid since they knew what was said to Moses, *No man shall see my face, and lice.* Hence it follows, *And they feared as they entered into the cloud.*

Ambrose. Now observe, that the cloud was not black from the darkness of condensed air, and such as to overcast the sky with a horrible gloom, but a shining cloud, from which we were not moistened with rain, but as the voice of Almighty God came forth the dew of faith was shed upon the hearts of men. For it follows, *And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear ye him.* Elias was not His Son. Moses was not. But this is the Son whom you see alone.

Cyril of Alexandria. (in Thes. lib. 12. c. 14.) How then should men suppose Him who is really the Son to be made or created, when God the Father thundered from above, *This is my beloved Son!* as if He said, Not one of My sons, but He who is truly and by nature My Son, according to whose example the others are adopted, He ordered them then to obey Him, when He added, *Hear ye him.* And to obey Him more than Moses and Elias, for Christ is the end of the Law and the Prophets. Hence the Evangelist adds significantly, *And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.*

Theophylact. Lest in truth any one should suppose that these words, *This is my beloved Son*, were uttered about Moses or Elias.

Ambrose. They then departed, when our Lord's manifestation had begun. There are three seen at the beginning, one at the end; for faith being made perfect, they are one. Therefore are they also received into the body of Christ, because we also shall be one in Christ Jesus; or perhaps, because the Law and the Prophets came out from the Word.

Theophylact. Now those things which began from the Word, end in the Word. For by this he implies that up to a certain time the Law and the Prophets appear, as here Moses and Elias; but afterwards, at their departure, Jesus is alone. For now abideth the Gospel, legal things having passed away.

Bede. And mark, that as when our Lord was baptized in Jordan, so also when He was glorified on the Mount, the mystery of the whole Trinity is declared; for His glory which we confess at baptism, we shall see at the resurrection. Nor in vain does the Holy Spirit appear here in the cloud, there in the form of a dove, seeing that he who now preserves with a simple heart the faith which he receives, shall then in the light of open vision look upon those things which he believed.

Origen. (ubi sup.) Now Jesus wishes not those things which relate to His glory to be spoken of before His passion. Hence it follows, *And they kept it close*. For men would have been offended, especially the multitude, if they saw Him crucified Who had been so glorified.

Damascene. (ubi sup.) This also our Lord commands, since He knew His disciples to be imperfect, seeing that they had not yet received the full measure of the Spirit, lest the hearts of others who had not seen should be prostrated by sorrow, and lest the traitor should be stirred up to a frantic hatred.

9:37–43

37. And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

38. And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child.

39. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40. And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not.

41. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42. And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God.

Bede. Certain places accord with certain events. On the Mount our Lord prays, is transfigured, reveals the secrets of His glory to His disciples; as He descends to the lower parts, He is received by a large concourse. As it is said, *And it came to pass, that on the next day, when he was come down from the hill, much people met him.* Above He makes known the voice of the Father, below He expels the evil spirits. Hence it follows, *And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee look upon my son.*

Titus Bostrensis. (non occ.) It seems indeed to me that this was a wise man. For he said not to the Saviour, "Do this or that," but, *Look on my son*, for this suffices for His salvation; as the prophet said, *Look on me, and have mercy on me*; and he says, *on my son*, to shew that his was a reasonable forwardness in crying out aloud among the multitude. He adds, *for he is mine only child.* As if to say, There is none other I can expect to be the consolation of my old age. He next enters into the sufferings, that he may move his Hearer to compassion, saying, *And, lo, the spirit taketh him.* He then seems to accuse the disciples, but his answer is rather a justification of his casting aside his fear, saying, *And I besought thy disciples to cast him out: and they could not.* As if he said, Think not that I have come lightly unto Thee. Marvellous is Thy greatness! I did not intrude upon Thy presence at once, but went first to Thy disciples. Because they failed to work the cure, I am now compelled to approach Thee. Our Lord therefore does not blame him, but the faithless generation; for it follows, *And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 57. in Matt.) But that this man was much weakened in faith, the writings of the Gospel shew us in several places. In that place where he says, *Help thou my unbelief*; (Mark 9:21, 23.) and, *If thou canst.* And in that where Christ said, *All things are possible to him that believeth, &c.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Hence it seems to me more correct to account the father of the demoniac unbelieving, because he also casts reproach upon the holy Apostles, saying that they could not subdue the evil spirits. But it were better to have sought favour from God by honouring Him, for He has respect to them that fear Him. But he who says that those are weak with respect to their power over evil spirits, who have obtained that power from Christ, calumniates rather the grace than those who are adorned with that grace in whom Christ works. Christ is therefore offended with the accusation of the saints, to whom was entrusted the word of holy preaching. Wherefore the Lord rebukes him and those like-minded with him, saying, *O faithless and perverse generation.* As if He said, Because of your unbelief the grace has not received its accomplishment.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 57. in Matt.) Now He does not direct His words to him alone, but to all the Jews, lest He should cause him to doubt. For it must have been that many were offended.

Theophylact. By the word *perverse*, He shews that this wickedness in them was not originally or by nature, for by nature indeed they were upright, being the seed of Abraham, but became perverted through malice.

Cyril of Alexandria. As if not knowing how to continue in the right beginnings. Now Christ disdains to dwell with those who are thus disposed. Hence He says, *How long shall I be with you, and suffer you?* Feeling troubled with their company, because of their evil deeds.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Hereby also He shews that His departure was desired by Him, not because the suffering of the cross was grievous, but rather their conversation.

Bede. Not that weariness has overcome His patience, but after the manner of a physician, when he sees a sick man acting contrary to his commands, he says, 'How long shall I come to thy house, when I order one thing, you do another. But to prove that He was not angry with the man, but with the sin, He immediately added, *Bring thy son hither.*

Titus Bostrensis. He might indeed have healed him by His simple command, but He makes his sufferings public, bringing the weak in faith to the sight of things present. Then the devil, when he perceived our Lord, rends and dashes the child down; as it follows, *And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him*; that so first the sufferings should be made manifest, then the remedy be applied.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) The Lord however does this not for display, but for the father's sake, that upon seeing the devil disturbed at the mere summons, he

might thus at least be led to the belief of the future miracles; of which it follows, *And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again unto his father.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Now before not his father but the devil possessed him, but now the Evangelist adds that the people were astonished at the greatness of God, saying, *And all were amazed at the mighty power of God*, which he says, because of the gift of Christ, who conferred on the holy Apostles also the power of working divine miracles, and having the mastery over evil spirits.

Bede. Now in a mystical manner in proportion to their deserts does our Lord daily ascend to some men, seeing that the perfect and those whose conversation is in heaven, He glorifies by exalting higher, instructing them in things eternal, and teaching them things which can not be heard by the multitude, but to others he descends, in that He strengthens the earthly and foolish men, teaching and chastening them. Now this demoniac Matthew calls a lunatic; Mark, deaf and dumb. (Matt. 17:15, Mark 9:25.) Matthew signifies those who change as the moon, increasing and decreasing through different vices, Mark those who are dumb in not confessing the faith, deaf in not hearing the very word of faith. While the boy is coming to our Lord, he is dashed to the ground; because men when turned to the Lord are often grievously afflicted by the devil, that he may instil a hatred of virtue, or revenge the injury of his expulsion. As in the beginning of the Church he waged as many fierce conflicts as he had to bewail losses suddenly brought upon His kingdom. But our Lord rebukes not the boy who suffered violence, but the evil spirit who inflicted it; for he who desires to correct the sinner, ought by reproof and abhorrence to drive away the vice, but to revive the man by gentleness, until he can restore him to the spiritual father of the Church.

9:43–45

43.—But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44. Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45. But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

Cyril of Alexandria. (non occ.) Every thing that Jesus did claimed admiration from all men for a peculiar and divine light reflected upon each of His works, according to the Psalms, *honour and majesty wilt thou lay upon him.* (Ps. 21:5.) Although all indeed marvelled at those things which He did, He however addresses what follows, not to all, but to His disciples; as it is said, *But while they wondered every one, &c.* He had shewn His glory on the mount to His disciples, and after this delivered a man from an evil spirit, but it was necessary for Him to undergo His passion for our salvation. Now His disciples might have been perplexed, saying, "Have we then been deceived in that we thought him to be God?" That they might know then what was to happen to Him, He bids them lay up in their minds as a certain deposit the mystery of His passion, saying, *Let these sayings sink down in your hearts.* By the word *your*, He distinguishes them from others. For the multitude were not to know that He was about to suffer, but were rather to be assured that the dead would rise again, destroying death, lest they should be offended.

Titus Bostrensis. While all thus were wondering at the miracles, He foretels His passion. For miracles do not save, but the cross conveys the benefit. Hence he adds, *For the Son of man shall he delivered into the hands of men.*

Origen. (in Matt. tom. 13.) But it is not clearly expressed by whom He is to be delivered, for one says, that He is to be delivered up by Judas, another by the devil; but Paul says, that *God the Father delivered Him up for us all*; (Rom. 8:32.) but Judas, as he delivered Him up for money, did it traitorously, the Father for His mercies' sake.

Theophylact. Now our Lord in condescension to their infirmities and governing them with a kind of economy, did not permit them to understand what was said of the cross; as it follows, *But they understood not.*

Bede. This ignorance of the disciples proceeds not so much from slowness of understanding as from affection, for since they were yet carnal and ignorant of the mystery of the cross, they could not believe that He whom they thought to be really God would suffer death. And because they were often accustomed to hear Him speak by figure, they thought that He meant figuratively something else, by what He said of His betrayal.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now some one perhaps will say, How were the disciples ignorant of the mystery of the cross, seeing that it was touched upon in several places by the shadows of the Law? But as Paul relates, *Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their hearts.* (2 Cor. 3:15.) It becomes then those who approach Christ, to say, *Open thou my eyes, that I may behold the wonderful things out of thy law.* (Ps. 119:18.)

Theophylact. Mark also the reverence of the disciples in what follows, *And they feared to ask him of that saying.* For fear is the first step to reverence.

9:46–50

46. Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

48. And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.

49. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us.

50. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

Cyril of Alexandria. (non occ.) The devil lays plots of various kinds for them that love the best way of life. And if indeed by carnal allurements he can gain possession of a man's heart, He sharpens his love of pleasure; but if a man has escaped these snares, he excites in him a desire of glory, and this passion for vain-glory had seized some one of His apostles. Hence it is said, *Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be the greatest.* For to have such thoughts, belongs to him who desires to be superior to the rest; but I think it improbable that all the disciples gave way to this weakness; and therefore suppose that the Evangelist, not to seem to lay the charge to any individual, expresses himself indefinitely, saying, *that*

there arose a reasoning among them.

Theophylact. Now it seems that this feeling was excited by the circumstance of their not being able to cure the demoniac. And while they were disputing thereupon, one said, It was not owing to my weakness, but another's, that he could not be cured; and so thereby was kindled a strife among them, which was the greatest.

Bede. Or, because they saw Peter, James, and John, taken apart to the mount, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven promised to Peter, they were angry that these three, or Peter, should have precedence over all; or because in the payment of the tribute they saw Peter made equal to the Lord, they supposed he was to be placed before the rest. But the attentive reader will find that the question was raised among them before the payment of the penny. For in truth Matthew relates that this took place at Capernaum; but Mark says, *And he came to Capernaum, and being in the house, he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves in the way? But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest.* (Mat. 18:24, Mark 9:33.)

Cyril of Alexandria. But our Lord, Who knew how to save, seeing in the hearts of the disciples the thought that had risen up thereupon as it were a certain root of bitterness, plucks it up by the roots before it received growth. For when passions first begin in us, they are easily subdued; but having gained strength, they are with difficulty eradicated. Hence it follows, *And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart, &c.* Let him who thinks Jesus to be mere man, know that he has erred; for the Word, although made flesh, remained God. For it is God alone Who is able to search into the heart and reins. But in taking a child, and placing it beside Him, He did it for the Apostles' sake and ours. For the disease of vain-glory feeds generally on those who have the preeminence among other men. But a child has a pure mind and unspotted heart, and abides in simplicity of thought; he courts not honours, nor knows the limits of each one's power, nor shuns seeming to be inferior to others, bearing no moroseness in his mind or heart. Such the Lord embraces and loves, and thinks them worthy to be near Him, as those who had chosen to taste of the things which are His; for He says, *Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart.* Hence it follows, *And he says unto them, Whosoever shall receive a child in my name, receiveth me.* As if He were to say, Seeing that there is one and the same reward to those that honour the saints, whether perchance such an one be the least, or one distinguished for honours and glory, for in him is Christ received, how vain is it to seek to have the preeminence?

Bede. Now herein He either teaches, that the poor of Christ are to be received by those who wish to be greater simply for His honour, or He persuades men that they are children in malice. Hence when He said, *Whoever shall receive that child*, he adds, *in my name*; that in truth they may pursue with diligence and reason for Christ's name that form of virtue which the child observes, with only nature for its guide. But because He also teaches that He is received in the child, and He Himself was born unto us a child; lest it should be thought that this was all which was seen, He subjoined, *And whoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me*; wishing verily to be believed, that as was the Father, such and so great was He.

Ambrose. For he who receives the followers of Christ, receives Christ; and he who receives the image of God, receives God; but because we cannot see the image of God, it has been made present to us by the incarnation of the Word, that the divine nature which is above us, may be reconciled to us.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now He still more plainly conveys the meaning of the preceding words, saying, *For he that is least among you all, the same shall be great*; in which He speaks of the modest man who from honesty thinks nothing high of himself.

Theophylact. Because then our Lord had said, *He who is least among you all, the same shall be great*, John feared, lest perhaps they had done wrong in hindering a certain man by their own power. For a prohibition does not shew the probitor to be inferior, but to be one who thinks himself somewhat superior. Hence it is added, *And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbad him.* Not indeed from envy, but to distinguish the working of miracles, for he had not received the power of working miracles with them, nor had the Lord sent him as He did them; nor did he follow Jesus in all things. Hence he adds, *because he followeth not with us.*

Ambrose. For John loving much, and therefore much beloved, thinks that they should be excluded from the privilege who did not practise obedience.

Cyril of Alexandria. But we ought to consider not so much the worker of the miracles, as the grace which was in him, who, by the power of Christ, performed miracles. But what if there should be both those which be numbered together with the Apostles, and those who are crowned with the grace of Christ; there are many diversities in Christ's gifts. But because the Saviour had given the Apostles power to cast out evil spirits, (Matt. 10:8.) they thought no one else but themselves alone was permitted to have this privilege granted to him, and therefore they come to enquire if it were lawful for others also to do this.

Ambrose. Now John is not blamed, because he did this from love, but he is taught to know the difference between the strong and the weak. And therefore our Lord though He rewards the stronger, yet does not exclude the weak; as it follows, *And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not, for he that is not against you is for you.* True, O Lord. For both Joseph and Nicodemus, through fear Thy secret disciples, when the time came, did not refuse their offices. But still since Thou saidst elsewhere, *He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth*, (Luke 11:23.) explain unto us lest the two seem contrary to one another. And it seems to me, if any one considers the Searcher of hearts, he cannot doubt that every man's action is distinguished by the motive of his heart.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 41. in Matt.) For in the other place when He said, *He that is not with me is against me*, He shews the Devil and the Jews to be opposed to Him; but here He shews that he who in Christ's name cast out devils, is partly on their side.

Cyril of Alexandria. As if He said, On the side of you who love Christ, are all they who wish to follow those things which conduce to His glory, being crowned with His grace.

Theophylact. Marvel then at the power of Christ, how His grace works by means of the unworthy and those who are not His disciples: as also men are sanctified through the priests, although the priests be not holy.

Ambrose. Now why does He in this place say that they are not to be hindered, who by the imposition of hands can subdue the unclean spirits, when according to Matthew, He says to these, *I never knew you?* (Matt. 7:23.) But we ought to perceive that there is no difference of opinion, but that the decision is this, that not only the official works but works of virtue are required in a priest, and that the name of Christ is so great, that even to the unholy it serves to give defence, but not grace. Let no one then claim to himself the grace of cleansing a man, because in him the power of the eternal Name has worked. For not by thy merits, but by his own hatred, the devil is conquered.

Bede. Therefore in heretics and false catholics, it becomes us to abhor, and forbid not the common sacraments in which they are with us, and not against us, but the divisions contrary to peace and truth, wherein they are against us as following not the Lord.

51. And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem,

52. And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53. And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54. And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55. But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.

Cyril of Alexandria. When the time was near at hand in which it behoved our Lord to accomplish His life-giving Passion, and ascend up to heaven, He determines to go up to Jerusalem, as it is said, *And it came to pass, &c.*

Titus Bostrensis. Because it was necessary that the true Lamb should there be offered, where the typical lamb was sacrificed; but it is said, *he stedfastly set his face*, that is, He went not here and there traversing the villages and towns, but kept on His way straight towards Jerusalem.

Bede. Let then the Heathen cease to mock the Crucified, as if He were a man, who it is plain, as God, both foresaw the time of His crucifixion, and going voluntarily to be crucified, sought with stedfast face, that is, with resolute and undaunted mind, the spot where He was to be crucified.

Cyril of Alexandria. And He sends messengers to make a place for Him and His companions, who when they came to the country of the Samaritans were not admitted, as it follows, *And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and altered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. And they did not receive him.*

Ambrose. Mark that He was unwilling to be received by those who He knew had not turned to Him with a simple heart. For if He had wished, He might have made them devout, who were undevout. But God calls those whom He thinks worthy, and whom He wills He makes religious. But why they did not receive Him the Evangelist mentions, saying, *Because his face was as if he would go to Jerusalem.*

Theophylact. But if one understands that they did not receive Him for this reason, because He had determined to go to Jerusalem, an excuse is found for them, who did not receive Him. But we must say, that in the words of the Evangelist, *And they did not receive him*, is implied that He did not go into Samaria, but afterwards as if some one had asked St. Luke, he explained in these words, why they did not receive Him. And He went not to them, i. e. not that He was unable, but that He did not wish to go there, but rather to Jerusalem.

Bede. Or the Samaritans see that our Lord is going to Jerusalem, and do not receive Him. *For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*, (John 4:9.) as John shews.

Cyril of Alexandria. But our Lord, Who knew all things before they came to pass, knowing that His messengers would not be received by the Samaritans, nevertheless commanded them to go before Him, because it was His practice to make all things conduce to the good of His disciples. Now He went up to Jerusalem as the time of His suffering drew near. In order then that they might not be offended, when they saw Him suffer, bearing in mind that they must also endure patiently when men persecute them, He ordained beforehand as a kind of prelude this refusal of the Samaritans. It was good for them also in another way. For they were to be the teachers of the world, going through towns and villages, to preach the doctrine of the Gospel, meeting sometimes with men who would not receive the sacred doctrine, allowing not that Jesus sojourned on earth with them. He therefore taught them, that in announcing the divine doctrine, they ought to be filled with patience and meekness, without bitterness, and wrath, and fierce enmity against those who had done any wrong to them. But as yet they were not so, nay, being stirred up with fervid zeal, they wished to bring down fire from heaven upon them. It follows, *And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, will thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, &c.*

Ambrose. For they knew both that when Phineas had slain the idolaters it was counted to him for righteousness; (Numb. 25:8, Ps. 107:31) and that at the prayer of Elijah fire came down from heaven, that the injuries of the prophet might be avenged. (2 Kings 1:10, 12.)

Bede. For holy men who well knew that that death which detaches the soul from the body was not to be feared, still because of their feelings who feared it, punished some sins with death, that both the living might be struck with a wholesome dread, and those who were punished with death might receive harm not from death itself but from sin, which would be increased were they to live.

Ambrose. But let him be avenged who fears. He who fears not, seeks not vengeance. At the same time the merits of the Prophets are likewise shewn to have been in the Apostles, seeing that they claim to themselves the right of obtaining the same power of which the Prophet was thought worthy; and fitly do they claim that at their command fire should come down from heaven, for they were the sons of thunder.

Titus Bostrensis. (v. Theophyl. in loc.) They thought it much juster that the Samaritans should perish for not admitting our Lord, than the fifty soldiers who tried to thrust down Elijah.

Ambrose. But the Lord is not moved against them, that He might shew that perfect virtue has no feeling of revenge, nor is there any anger where there is fulness of love. For weakness must not be thrust out, but assisted. Let indignation be far from the religious, let the high-souled have no desire of vengeance. Hence it follows, *But he turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.*

Bede. The Lord blames them, not for following the example of the holy Prophet, but for their ignorance in taking vengeance while they were yet inexperienced, perceiving that they did not desire correction from love, but vengeance from hatred. After that He had taught them what it was to love their neighbour as themselves, and the Holy Ghost also had been infused into them, there were not lacking these punishments, though far less frequent than in the Old Testament, because *the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* As if He said, And do you therefore who are sealed with His Spirit, imitate also His actions, now determining charitably, hereafter judging justly.

Ambrose. For we must not always punish the offender, since mercy sometimes does more good, leading thee to patience, the sinner to repentance. Lastly,

those Samaritans believed the sooner, who were in this place saved from fire.

9:57–62

57. And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59. And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61. And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

62. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. (non occ.) Although the Almighty Lord is bountiful, He does not grant to every one absolutely and indiscriminately heavenly and divine gifts, but to those only who are worthy to receive them, who free themselves and their souls from the stains of wickedness. And this we are taught by the force of the angelic words, *And it came to pass, that, us they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee.* First indeed there is much tardiness implied in the manner of his coming. It is next shewn that he is filled with too great presumption. For he sought not to follow Christ simply as several others of the people, but rather caught at the honour of the Apostleship. Whereas Paul says, *No one taketh the honour to himself but he that is called of God.* (Heb. 5:4.)

Athanasius. (non occ.) He dared also to match himself with the incomprehensible power of the Saviour, saying, *I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*; for to follow the Saviour simply to hear His teaching is possible to human nature, as it directs itself towards men, but it is not possible to go with Him wherever He is; for He is incomprehensible, and is not confined by place.

Cyril of Alexandria. In another respect also our Lord deservedly gives him a refusal, for He taught that to follow the Lord, a man must take up his cross, and renounce the affection of this present life. And our Lord finding this lacking in him does not blame him, but corrects him.

It follows, *And Jesus says to him, The foxes have holes, &c.*

Theophylact. For having seen our Lord drawing much people to Him, he thought that he received reward from them, and that if he followed our Lord, he might obtain money.

Bede. Therefore it is said to him, Why do you seek to follow Me for the riches and gain of this world, when so great is My poverty that I have not even a place of rest, and take shelter under another man's roof.

Chrysostom. See how our Lord sets forth by his works the poverty which he taught. For him was no table spread, no lights, no house, nor any such thing.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now under a mystical signification He applies the name of foxes and birds of the air to the wicked and crafty powers of evil spirits. As if He said, Since foxes and birds of the air have their abode in thee, how shall Christ rest in thee? *What fellowship has light with darkness?* (2 Cor. 6:14.)

Athanasius. Or herein our Lord teaches the greatness of His gift, as if He said, All created things may be confined by place, but the Word of God has incomprehensible power. Say not then, *I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.* But if thou wouldest be a disciple, cast off[1] foolish things, for it is impossible for him who remains in foolishness to become a disciple of the Word.

Ambrose. Or, He compares foxes to heretics, because they are indeed a wily animal, and, ever intent upon fraud, commit their robberies by stealth. They let nothing be safe, nothing be at rest, nothing secure, for they hunt their prey into the very abodes of men. The fox again, an animal full of craft, makes no hole for itself, yet likes to lie always concealed in a hole. So the heretics, who know not how to construct a house for themselves, circumscribe and deceive others. This animal is never tamed, nor is it of use to man. Hence the Apostle, *A heretic after the first and second admonition reject.* (Tit. 3:10.) But the birds of the air, which are frequently brought in to represent spiritual wickedness, build as it were their nests in the breasts of the wicked, and as long as deceit reigns over the affections, the divine principle has no opportunity to take possession. But when a man has proved his heart to be innocent, upon him Christ leans in some measure the weight of His greatness, for by a more abundant shedding of grace He is planted in the breasts of good men. So then it does not seem reasonable that we should think him faithful and simple, who is rejected by the judgment of the Lord, notwithstanding that he promised the service of unwearied attendance; but our Lord cares not for this kind of service, but only purity of affection, nor is his attendance accepted whose sense of duty is not proved. For the hospitality of faith should be given with circumspection, lest while opening the interior of our house to the unbelieving, through our imprudent credulity we fall a snare to the treachery of others. Therefore that you may be aware that God despises not attendance upon him but deceit, He who rejected the deceitful man chose the innocent. For it follows, *And he said unto another, Follow me.* But He says this to him, whose father He knew to be dead. Hence it follows, *But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.*

Bede. He did not refuse the discipleship, but his wish was, having fulfilled the filial duty of burying his father, to follow Christ more freely.

Ambrose. But the Lord calls those upon whom He has compassion. Hence it follows, *And Jesus said, Let the dead bury their dead.* Since we have received as a religious duty the burial of the human body, how is it thus that the burial even of a father's dead body is forbidden, unless you are to understand that human things are to be postponed to divine? It is a good employment, but the hindrance is greater, for he who divides his pursuits, draws down his affections; he who divides his care, delays his advances. We must first set about the things which are most important. For the Apostles also, that they might not be occupied in the office of distributing alms, ordained ministers for the poor.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 27. in Matt.) But what more necessary than the burial of his father, what more easy, seeing that there would not be much time given to it? We are then hereby taught that it becomes us not to spend even the slightest portion of our time in vain, although we have a thousand things to compel us, nay to prefer spiritual things to even our greatest necessities. For the devil watchfully presses close upon us, wishing to find any opening, and if he causes a slight negligence, he ends in producing a great weakness.

Ambrose. The performance of a father's burial is not then prohibited, but the observance of religious duty is preferred to the ties of relationship. The one is left to those in like condition, the other is commanded to those who are left. But how can the dead bury the dead? unless you here understand a twofold death, one a natural death, the other the death of sin. (Rom. 9:11.) There is also a third death, by which we die unto sin, live unto God.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) By thus saying, *their dead*, he shews that this man's father was not his dead, for I suppose that the deceased was of the number of the unbelieving.

Ambrose. Or because the throat of the ungodly is an open sepulchre, their memory is ordered to be forgotten whose services die together with their bodies. Nor is the son recalled from his duty to his father, but the faithful is separated from the communion of the unbelieving; there is no prohibition of duty, but a mystery of religion, that is, that we should have no fellowship with the dead Gentiles.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else, his father was borne down with years, and he thought he was doing an honourable act in proposing to pay the kind offices which were due to him, according to Exodus, *Honour thy father and thy mother.* (Exod. 20:12.) Hence when calling him to the ministry of the Gospel, our Lord said, *Follow me*, he sought for a time of respite, which should suffice for the support of his decrepit father, saying, *Permit me first to go and bury my father*, not that he asked to bury his deceased father, for Christ would not have hindered the wish to do this, but he said, *Bury*, that is, support in old age even till death. But the Lord said to him, *Let the dead bury their dead.* For there were other attendants also bound by the same tie of relationship, but as I consider dead, because they had not yet believed Christ. Learn from this, that our duty to God is to be preferred to our love for our parents, to whom we shew reverence, because through them have we been born. But the God of all, when as yet we were not, brought us into being, our parents were made the ministers of our introduction.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 23.) Our Lord spoke this to the man to whom He had said, *Follow me.* But another disciple put himself forward, to whom no one had spoken any thing, saying, *I will follow thee, O Lord; but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at home*, lest perchance *they* look for me as they are wont.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now this promise is worthy of our admiration and full of all praise, but to bid farewell to those who are at home, to get leave from them, shews that he was still somehow divided from the Lord, in that he had not yet resolved, to make this venture with his whole heart. For to wish to consult relations who would not agree to his proposal betokens one somewhat wavering. Wherefore our Lord condemns this, saying, *No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* He puts his hand to the plough who is ambitious to follow, yet looks back again who seeks an excuse for delay in returning home, and consulting with his friends.

Augustine. (Serm. 100.) As if he said to him, The East calls thee, and thou turnest to the West.

Bede.: To put one's hand to the plough, is also, (as it were by a certain sharp instrument,) by the wood and iron of our Lord's passion, to wear away the hardness of our heart, and to open it to bring forth the fruits of good works. But if any one, having begun to exercise this, delights to look back with Lot's wife to the things which he had left, he is deprived of the gift of the kingdom to come.

Greek Expositor. (Nilus Monac.) For the frequent looking upon the things which we have forsaken, through the force of habit draws us back to our past way of life. For practice has great power to retain to itself. Is not habit generated of use, and nature of habit? But to get rid of or change nature is difficult; for although when compelled it for a while turns aside, it very rapidly returns to itself.

Bede. But if the disciple about to follow our Lord is reproved for wishing even to bid farewell at home, what will be done to such as for no advantage-sake frequently visit the houses of those whom they have left in the world?

CHAP. 10

10:1–2

1. After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

2. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

Cyril of Alexandria. God had made known by the Prophets that the preaching of the Gospel of salvation was to embrace not only Israel, but also the Gentile nations; and therefore after the twelve Apostles, there were other seventy-two (Vulg. septuaginta duos.) also appointed by Christ, as it is said, *After these things the Lord appointed other seventy-two also.*

Bede. Rightly are seventy-two sent, for to so many nations of the world was the Gospel to be preached, that as at first twelve were appointed because of the twelve tribes of Israel, so, these also were ordained as teachers for the instruction of the foreign nations.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. 1. ii. q. 14.) As also in twenty-four hours the whole world moves round and receives light, so the mystery of enlightening the world by the Gospel of the Trinity, is hinted at in the seventy-two disciples. For three times twenty-four makes seventy-two. Now as no one doubts that the twelve Apostles foreshadowed the order of Bishops, so also we must know that these seventy-two represented the presbytery, (that is, the second order of priests.) Nevertheless, in the earliest times of the Church, as the Apostolical writings bear witness, both were called presbyters, both also called bishops, the former of these signifying "ripeness of wisdom," the latter, "diligence in the pastoral care."

Cyril of Alexandria. An outline of this ordinance also was set forth in the words of Moses, who at the command of God chose out seventy, upon whom God poured out His Spirit. In the book of Numbers also it was written of the children of Israel, that they came to Elim, which is by interpretation "ascent," and there were there twelve fountains of water, and seventy palm trees. (Numb. 33:9.) For when we fly to spiritual refreshment, we shall find twelve fountains, namely, the holy Apostles, from whom we imbibe the knowledge of salvation as from the well-springs of the Saviour; (Isai. 12:3.) and

seventy palms, that is, those who were now appointed by Christ. For the palm is a tree of sound core, striking deep root and fruitful, always growing by the water side, yet at the same time putting forth its leaves upwards.

It follows, *And he sent them two and two.*

Gregory. (Hom. 17. in Ev.) He sends the disciples to preach two and two, because there are two commands of charity, the love of God, and love of our neighbour; (and charity cannot exist without at least two;) thereby silently suggesting to us, that he who has not love to another, ought not to undertake the office of preaching.

Origen. Likewise also the twelve were reckoned by two and two, as Matthew shews in his enumeration of them. (Matt. 10:2.) For that two should be joined in service, seems from the word of God to be an ancient custom. For God led Israel out of Egypt by the hands of Moses and Aaron. Joshua and Caleb also, united together, appeased the people who had been provoked by the twelve spies. (Numb. 13, 14. Ex. 12.) Hence it is said, *A brother assisted by a brother is as a fortified city.* (Prov. 18:19. Vulg.)

Basil. At the same time it is implied by this, that if any are equal in spiritual gifts, they should not suffer a fondness for their own opinion to get the better of them.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) It is rightly added, *before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.* For the Lord follows His preachers, since the preaching comes first, and then the Lord enters into the tabernacle of our heart; seeing that through the words of exhortation going before, truth is received into the mind. Hence Esaias says to the preachers, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight a highway for our God.* (Isa. 40:3.)

Theophylact. The Lord had appointed the disciples for the sake of the multitude, who were in want of teachers. For as our corn fields require many reapers, so the innumerable company of those who are to believe need many teachers, as it follows, *The harvest truly is great.*

Chrysostom. But how does He give the name of harvest to a work only just now at its beginning? the plough not yet put down, nor the furrows turned, He yet speaks of harvests, for His disciples might waver and say, How can we so small a number convert the whole world, how can foolish men reform the wise, naked men those that are armed, subjects their rulers? Lest they should be disturbed then by such thoughts, He calls the Gospel a harvest; as if He says, *All things are ready, I send you to a gathering of fruits already prepared.* Ye can sow and reap the same day. As then the husbandman goes out to harvest rejoicing, much more also and with greater cheerfulness must you go out into the world. For this is the true harvest, which shews the fields all prepared for you.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But not without deep sorrow can we add, *but the labourers are few.* For although there are who would hear good things, they are wanting who should spread them. Behold the world is full of priests, but seldom is there found a labourer in God's harvest, because we undertake indeed the priestly office, but we perform not its works.

Bede. Now as the great harvest is this whole multitude of believers, so the few labourers are the Apostles, and their followers who are sent to this harvest.

Cyril of Alexandria. (non occ. v. Tit. Bost.) As the large fields require many reapers, so also do the multitude of believers in Christ. Hence He adds, *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.* Now mark that when He said, *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into the harvest*, He afterwards Himself performed it. He then is the Lord of the harvest, and by Him, and together with Him, God the Father rules over all.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 32. in Matt.) But he afterwards increased them greatly, not by adding to their number, but awarding to them power. He implies that it is a great gift to send labourers into the divine harvest, by His saying that the Lord of the harvest must be prayed to upon this account.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Hereby also the people must be induced to pray for their pastors, that they may he able to work what is good for them, and that their tongue grow not lifeless in exhortation. For often for their own wickedness their tongue is tied. But often for the fault of the people it comes to pass that the word of preaching is withdrawn from their rulers.

10:3–4

3. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

Cyril of Alexandria. Luke next relates, that the seventy disciples obtained for themselves from Christ apostolical learning, lowliness, innocency, justice, and to prefer no worldly things to holy preachings, but to aspire to such fortitude of mind as to be afraid of no terrors, not even death itself. He adds therefore, *Go.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 33. in Matt.) For their comfort amid every danger was the power of Him who sent them. And therefore saith He, *Behold, I send you*; as if he said, This will suffice for your consolation, this will be enough to make you hope, instead of fearing the coming evils which He signifies, adding, *as lambs among wolves.*

Isidore of Peleusium. (l. i. ep. 438.) Denoting the simplicity and innocence in His disciples. For those who were riotous, and by their enormities did despite to their nature, He calls not lambs, but goats.

Ambrose. Now these animals are at variance among themselves, so that the one is devoured by the other, the lambs by the wolves; but the good Shepherd has no fear of wolves for His flock. And therefore the disciples are appointed not to make prey, but to impart grace. For the watchfulness of the good Shepherd causes the wolves to attempt nothing against the lambs; He sends them as lambs amid wolves that that prophecy might be fulfilled, *The wolf and the lamb shall feed together.* (Isaiah 65:25.)

Chrysostom. (Hom. 33 in Matt.) For this was a clear announcement of glorious triumph, that the disciples of Christ, when surrounded by their enemies as lambs among wolves, should still convert them.

Bede. Or He especially gives the name of wolves to the Scribes and Pharisees, who are the Jewish clergy.

Ambrose. Or the heretics are compared to wolves. For wolves are beasts who lay in wait near the sheep folds, and prowl about the shepherds' cottages. They dare not enter the abodes of men, they pry out sleeping dogs, absent or slothful shepherds; they seize the sheep by the throat, that they may quickly strangle them; ravenous beasts, with bodies so stiff that they cannot easily turn themselves, but are carried along by their own impetus, and so are often deceived. If they are the first to see a man, it is said, they by a certain natural impulse, tear out his voice; but if a man first sees them, they quake with fear. In like manner the heretics lurk about Christ's sheep folds, howl near the cottages at night time. For night is the time for the treacherous who obscure the light of Christ with the mists of false interpretation. The inns of Christ, however, they dare not enter, and therefore are not healed, as he was in an inn who fell among thieves. They look out for the shepherds' absence, for they can not attack the sheep when the shepherds are by. Owing also to the inflexibility of a hard and obstinate mind, they seldom if ever turn from their error, while Christ the true interpreter of Scripture mocks them, so that they vent forth their violence in vain, and are not able to hurt; and if they overtake any one by the subtle trickery of their disputations, they make him dumb. For he is dumb who confesses not the word of God with the glory which belongs to it. Beware then lest the heretic deprive you of your voice, and lest you detect him not first. For he is creeping on while his treachery is disguised. But if you have discovered his unholy desires, you can not fear the loss of a holy voice. They attack the throat, they wound the vitals while they seek the soul. If also you hear any one called a priest, and you know his robberies, outwardly he is a sheep, inwardly a wolf, who is longing to gratify his rage with the insatiable cruelty of human murder.

Gregory. (Hom. 17. in Ev.) For many when they receive the right of rule, are vehement in persecuting their subjects, and manifesting the terrors of their power. And since they have no bowels of mercy, their desire is to seem to be masters, forgetting altogether that they are fathers, changing an occasion for humility, into an exaltation of power. We must on the other hand consider, that as lambs we are sent among wolves that preserving the feeling of innocence, so we should make no malicious attacks. For he who undertakes the office of preacher ought not to bring evils upon others, but to endure them; who although at times an upright zeal demands that he should deal harshly with his subjects, should still inwardly in his heart love with a fatherly feeling those whom outwardly he visits with censure. And that ruler gives a good example of this, who never submits the neck of his soul to the yoke of earthly desire. Hence it is added, *Carry neither purse nor scrip.*

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 2.) The sum of which is, that men ought to be so virtuous that the Gospel should make no less progress through their way of life than their preaching.

Gregory. (Hom. 17. in Ev.) For the preacher (of the Gospel) ought to have such trust in God, that although he has provided not for the expenses of this present life, he should still be most certainly convinced that these will not fail him; lest while his mind is engaged in His temporal things, he should be less careful for the spiritual things of others.

Cyril of Alexandria. Thus He had already commanded them to have no care for these persons, when He said, *I send you as lambs among wolves.* And He also forbade all care about what is external to the body, by saying, *Take neither purse nor scrip.* Nor did He allow men to take with them any of those things which were not attached to the body. Hence He adds, *Nor shoes.* He not only forbade them to take purse and scrip, but He did not allow them to receive any distraction in their work, such as interruption by greetings on their way. Hence He adds, *Salute no one by the way.* Which had long ago been said by Elisha. (2 Kings. 4:29.) As if He said, Proceed straight on to your work without exchanging blessings with others. For it is a loss to waste the time which is fitter for preaching, in unnecessary things.

Ambrose. Our Lord did not then forbid these things because the exercise of benevolence was displeasing to Him, but because the motive of following after devotedness was more pleasing.

Gregory Nazianzen. (ubi sup.) The Lord gave them these commands also for the glory of the word, lest it should seem that enticements could more prevail over them. He wished them also not to be anxious to speak to others.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) If any one would have these words taken also allegorically, the money shut up in a purse is the hidden wisdom. He then who has the word of wisdom, and neglects to employ it for his neighbour, is like one who keeps his money tied up in his purse. But by the scrip is meant the troubles of the world, by the shoes (made of the skins of dead animals) are signified the examples of dead works. He then who undertakes the office of preacher ought not to bear the burden of business, lest while this presses down his neck he should not rise to the preaching of heavenly things; nor ought he to behold the example of foolish works, lest he think to shield his own works as by dead skins, that is, lest because he observes that others have done these things, he imagine that he also is at liberty to do the same.

Ambrose. Our Lord also would have nothing human in us. For Moses is bid to loose off the human and earthly shoe when he was sent to deliver the people. (Exod. 3:5) But if any one is perplexed why in Egypt we are ordered to eat the lamb with shoes on, (Exod. 12:11.) but the Apostles are appointed to preach the Gospel without shoes: he must consider, that one in Egypt ought still to beware of the serpent's bite, for there were many poisonous creatures in Egypt. And he who celebrates the Passover in figure may be exposed to the wound, but the minister of truth fears no poison.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Now every one who salutes on the way does so from the accident of the journey, not for the sake of wishing health. He then who not from love of a heavenly country, but from seeking reward, preaches salvation to his hearers, does as it were salute on the journey, since accidentally, not from any fixed intention, he desires the salvation of his hearers.

10:5–12

5. And into whatever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

6. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer s worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:

9. And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say,

11. Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is

come nigh unto you.

12. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 35. in Matt.) Peace is the mother of all good things, without it all other things are vain. Our Lord therefore commanded His disciples on entering a house first to pronounce peace as a sign of good things, saying, *Into whatever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.*

Ambrose. That in truth we should convey the message of peace, and that our very first entrance be attended with the blessing of peace.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 32. in Matt. Orat. cont. Jud. 3.) And hence he who presides in the Church gives it, saying, *Peace unto all.* Now holy men ask for peace, not only that which dwells among men in mutual intercourse, but that which belongs to ourselves. For oftentimes we wage war in our hearts, and are disturbed even when no one troubles us; bad desires also frequently rise up against us.

Titus Bostrensis. But it is said, *Peace he to this house*, that is, to them that dwell in the house. As if he says, I speak unto all, both the greater and the less, yet should not your salutation be addressed to them that are unworthy of it. Hence it is added, *And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it.* As if he says, You indeed shall utter the word, but the blessing of peace shall be applied wherever I shall deem men worthy of it. But if any one is not worthy, ye are not mocked, the grace of your word has not perished, but is returned unto you. And this is what is added, *But if not, it shall return unto you again.*

Gregory. (Hom. 17. in Ev.) For the peace which is offered by the mouth of the preacher shall either rest on the house, if there be any one in it predestined to life, who follows the heavenly word which he hears; or if no one be willing indeed to hear, the preacher himself shall not be without fruit, for the peace returns to him, while the Lord gives him the recompense of reward for the labour of his work. But if our peace is received, it is meet that we should obtain earthly supplies from those to whom we offer the rewards of a heavenly country. Hence it follows: *And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give.* Mark, that He who forbade them to carry purse and scrip, allows them to be an expense to others, and to receive sustenance from preaching.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But lest any one should say, I am spending my own property in preparing a table for strangers, He first makes them offer the gift of peace, to which nothing is equal, that you may know that you receive greater things than you give.

Titus Bostrensis. Or else; Since you are not appointed judges as to who are worthy and who are unworthy, eat and drink what things they offer to you. But leave to me the trial of those who receive you, unless you happen also to know that the son of peace is not there, for perhaps in that case you ought to depart.

Theophylact. See then how He taught His disciples to beg, and wished them to receive their nourishment as a reward. For it is added, *For the labourer is worthy of his hire.*

Gregory. (ubi sup.) For now the very food which supports him is part of the wages of the labourer, as in this life the hire commences with the labour of preaching, which in the next is completed with the sight of truth. And here we must consider that two rewards are due to one work of ours, one on the journey, which supports us in labour, the other in our country, which recompenses us at the resurrection. Therefore the reward which we receive now ought so to work in us, that we the more vigorously strive to gain the succeeding reward. Every true preacher then ought not so to preach, that he may receive a reward at the present time, but so to receive a reward that he may have strength to preach. For whoever so preaches that here he may receive the reward of praise, or riches, deprives himself of an eternal reward.

Ambrose. Another virtue is added, that we should not go about easily, changing from house to house. For it follows, *Go not from house to house*; that is, that we should preserve a consistency in our love towards our hosts, nor lightly loose any bond of friendship.

Bede. Now having described the reception from different houses, he teaches them what they ought to do in the cities; namely, to have intercourse with the good in all, but to keep from the society of the wicked in every thing; as it follows, *But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you.*

Theophylact. Although they be few and poor, ask for nothing more; He also tells them to work miracles, and their word shall draw men to their preaching. Hence he adds, *And heal the sick that are therein, and say to them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* For if you first heal and then teach, the word will prosper, and men believe that the kingdom of God is come nigh. For they would not be cured unless by the working of some divine power. But also when they are healed in their soul, the kingdom of God comes nigh unto them, for it is far off from him over whom sin has the dominion.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 32. in Matt.) Now mark the excellence of the Apostles. They are bid to utter nothing relating to sensible things, such as Moses and the Prophets spoke of, namely, earthly goods, but certain new and marvellous things, namely, *the kingdom of God.*

Maximus. (Cap. Theol. 191.) Which it is said *is come nigh*, not to shew the shortness of time, for the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, but to mark the disposition of men towards the kingdom of God, which is indeed potentially in all believers, but actually in those who reject the life of the body, and choose only the spiritual life; who are able to say, *Now I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.* (Gal. 2:20.)

Ambrose. He next teaches them to shake off the dust from their feet when the men of a city have refused to entertain them, saying, *Into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, shake off the dust.*

Bede. Either as a testimony to the earthly toil which they had in vain undergone for them, or to shew that so far from seeking any thing earthly from them, they suffer not even the dust from their land to cleave to them. Or by the feet is meant the very labour and walking to and fro of preaching; but the dust with which they are sprinkled is the lightness of worldly thoughts, from which even the greatest teachers cannot be free. Those then who have despised the teaching, turn the labours and dangers of the teachers into a testimony of their condemnation.

Origen. By wiping off the dust of their feet against them, they in some sort say, The dust of your sins shall deservedly come upon you. And mark that the cities which receive not the Apostles and sound doctrine have streets, according to Matthew, *Broad is the way which leadeth to destruction.* (Matt. 7:13.)

Theophylact. And as they who receive the Apostles are said to have the kingdom of God come nigh unto them as a blessing, so those who do not receive

them are said to have it nigh unto them as a curse. Hence He adds, *Notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*, as the coming of a king is to some for punishment, but to some for honour. Hence it is added respecting their punishment, *But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom, &c.*

Eusebius. For in the city of Sodom Angels were not without entertainment, but Lot was found worthy to receive them into his house. (Gen. 19.) If then at the coming of the disciples into a city there shall not be found one to receive them, will not that city be worse than Sodom? These words persuaded them to attempt boldly the rule of poverty. For there could not be a city or village without some inhabitants acceptable to God. For Sodom could not exist without a Lot found in it, at whose departure the whole was suddenly destroyed.

Bede. The men of Sodom, although they were hospitable in the midst of all their wickedness of soul and body, yet were there no such guests found among them as the Apostles. Lot indeed was righteous both in seeing and hearing, yet he is not said to have taught or worked miracles.

10:13–16

13. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

16. He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me.

Ambrose. Our Lord warns us that they will meet with a heavier punishment who have refused to follow the Gospel than those who have chosen to break the law; saying, *Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida!*

Bede. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, Tiberias also which John mentions, are cities of Galilee situated on the shore of the lake of Gennesaret, which is called by the Evangelists the sea of Galilee or Tiberias. Our Lord thus mourns over these cities which after such great miracles and wonders repented not, and are worse than the Gentiles who break through the law of nature only, seeing that after despising the written law, they feared not to despise also the Son of God and His glory. Hence it follows, *For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented sitting in sackcloth and ashes, &c.* By sackcloth, which is woven together from the hairs of goats, he signifies a sharp remembrance of previous sin. But by ashes, he hints at the consideration of death, by which we are reduced to dust. Again, by the *sitting down*, he implies the lowliness of our conscience. Now we have seen in this day the word of the Saviour fulfilled, since Chorazin and Bethsaida, though our Lord was present among them, believed not, and Tyre and Sidon were friendly both to David and Solomon, (1 Kings 5.) and afterwards believed in the disciples of Christ who preached the Gospel there.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 38. in Matt.) Our Lord mourns over these cities for our example, because shedding tears and bitter lamentations over those who are insensible to grief, is no slight antidote, tending both to the correction of the insensible, and to the remedy and consolation of those who mourn over them. Again, He draws them over to what is good, not only by lamenting over them, but also by alarming them. Hence it follows, *But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, &c.* This we ought also to listen to. For not upon them alone, but upon us also, He hath passed sentence, if we receive not the guests who come to us, since He commanded them to shake off the very dust from their feet. And in another place: Now when our Lord had done many mighty works in Capernaum, and had Himself dwelt there, it seemed to be exalted above the other cities, but through unbelief fell to destruction. Hence it follows, *And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell*; that, in fact, the judgment might be in proportion to the honour.

Bede. This sentence admits of two meanings: Either for this reason shalt thou be thrust down into hell, because thou proudly resisted My preaching; that in truth she might be understood to have raised herself up to heaven by her pride. Or, because thou art exalted to heaven by My dwelling in thee, and by My miracles, shalt thou be beaten with more stripes, since even these thou refusedst to believe. And that no one should suppose that this interpretation applied only either to the cities or the persons who, seeing our Lord in the flesh despised Him, and not to all also who now despise the words of the Gospel, He proceeds to add these words, *He that heareth you, heareth me.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Whereby He teaches, that whatever is said by the holy Apostles must be received, since he who heareth them heareth Christ, and an inevitable punishment therefore hangs over heretics who neglect the words of the Apostles; for it follows, *and he who despises you despises me.*

Bede. That is, that every one indeed on hearing or despising the preaching of the Gospel might learn that he is not despising or hearing the mere individual preacher, but our Lord and Saviour, nay the Father Himself; for it follows, *And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.* For the Master is heard in His disciple, the Father honoured in His Son.

Augustine. (Serm. 102.) But if the word of God reaches to us also, and appoints us in the Apostles place, beware of despising us, lest that reach unto Him which you have done unto us.

Bede. It may also be understood as follows, *He who despiseth you, despiseth me*, that is, he who shews not mercy to one of the least of My brethren, neither shews it to Me. But *he who despiseth me,* (refusing to believe on the Son of God,) *despiseth him that sent me.* (Matt. 25:40.) *For I and my Father are one.* (John 10:30.)

Titus Bostrensis. But at the same time He herein consoles His disciples, as if He said, Say not why are we about to suffer reproach. Let your speech be with moderation. I give you grace, upon Me your reproaches fall.

10:17–20

17. And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

20. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

Cyril of Alexandria. It was said above that our Lord sent forth His disciples sealed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and that being made ministers of preaching, they received power over the unclean spirits. But now when they returned, they confess the power of Him who honoured them, as it is said, *And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us, &c.* They seemed indeed to rejoice rather that they were made workers of miracles, than that they had become ministers of preaching. But they had better have rejoiced in those whom they had taken, as St. Paul says to them that were called by him, *My joy and my crown.* (Phil. 4:1.)

Gregory. (23. Mor. c. 4.) Now our Lord, in a remarkable manner, in order to put down high thoughts in the hearts of His disciples, Himself related the account of the fall which the teacher of pride suffered; that they might learn by the example of the author of pride, what they would have to dread from the sin of pride. Hence it follows, *I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*

Basil. (Hom. Quod Deus non est auctor mali.) He is called Satan, because he is an enemy to God, (for this the Hebrew word signifies,) but he is called the Devil, because he assists us in doing evil, and is an accuser. His nature is incorporeal, his abode in the air.

Bede. He says not, 'I see now,' but referring to past time, *I saw*, when he fell. But by the words *as lightning*, He signifies either a fall headlong from the high places to the lowest, or that now cast down, he transforms himself into an angel of light. (2 Cor. 11:14.)

Titus Bostrensis. Now He says that He saw it, as being Judge, for He knew the sufferings of the spirits. Or He says, *as lightning*, because by nature Satan shone as lightning, but became darkness through his affections, since what God made good he changed in himself to evil.

Basil. (adv. Eunom. l. 3.) For the heavenly Powers are not naturally holy, but according to the analogy of divine love they receive their measure of sanctification. And as iron placed in the fire does not cease to be iron, though by the violent application of the flame, both in effect and appearance, it passes into fire; so also the Powers on high, from their participation in that which is naturally holy, have a holiness implanted in them. For Satan had not fallen, if by nature he had been unsusceptible of evil.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else, *I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven*, that is, from the highest power to the lowest impotence. For before the coming of our Saviour, he had subdued the world to him, and was worshipped by all men. But when the only-begotten Word of God came down from heaven, he fell as lightning, seeing that he is trodden under foot by those who worship Christ. As it follows, *And, behold, I give unto you power to tread upon serpents, &c.*

Titus Bostrensis. Serpents indeed at one time under a figure were made to bite the Jews, and kill them because of their unbelief. But there came One who should destroy those serpents; even the Brazen Serpent, (Numb. 21:8.) the Crucified, so that if any one should look on Him believing, he might be healed from his wounds and saved.

Chrysostom. Then lest we should suppose this was spoken of beasts, He added, *And over all the power of the enemy.*

Bede. That is, I give you the power of casting out every kind of unclean spirit, from the bodies possessed. And as far as regards themselves, He adds, *And nothing shall hurt you.* Although it might also be taken literally. For Paul when attacked by a viper suffered no injury. (Acts 28:5.) John having drunk poison is not harmed by it [a]. But I think there is this difference between serpents who bite with the teeth, and scorpions who sting with the tail, that the serpents signify men or spirits raging openly, scorpions signify them plotting in secret. Or serpents are those which east the poison of evil persuasion upon virtues just beginning, scorpions which go about to corrupt at last virtues which have been brought to perfection.

Theophylact. Or serpents are those which visibly hurt, as the evil spirit of adultery and murder. But those are called scorpions which invisibly injure, as in the sins of the spirit.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Hom. in Cant.) For pleasure is called in Scripture a serpent, which by nature is such that if its head has reached a wall so as to press upon it, it drags its whole body after it. So nature has given man the habitation which was necessary for him. But by means of this necessity, pleasure assaults the heart, and perverts it to the indulgence of immoderate ornament; in addition to this it brings in its train covetousness, which is followed by lust, that is, the last member or tail of the beast. But as it is not possible to draw back the serpent by its tail, so to remove pleasure we must not begin with the last, unless one has closed the first entrance to evil.

Athanasius. (Orat. in Pass. et cruce Domini.) But now through the power of Christ boys make a mock at pleasure, which formerly led away the aged, and virgins stedfastly trample upon the desires of serpentine pleasure. Some also tread upon the very sting of the scorpion, that is, of the devil, namely death, and fearing not destruction, become witnesses of the word. But many giving up earthly things walk with a free step in heaven, dreading not the prince of the air.

Titus Bostrensis. But because the joy with which He saw them rejoice savoured of vain-glory, for they rejoiced that they were as it were exalted, and were a terror to men and evil spirits, our Lord therefore adds, *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you, &c.*

Bede. They are forbidden to rejoice in the subjection of the spirits to God, since they were flesh; for to cast out spirits and to exercise other powers is sometimes not on account of his merit who works, but is wrought through the invocation of Christ's name to the condemnation of those who mock it, or to the advantage of those who see and hear.

Cyril of Alexandria. Why, O Lord, dost not Thou permit men to rejoice in the honours which are conferred by Thee, since it is written, *In thy name shall they rejoice all the day?* (Ps. 89:16.) But the Lord raises them up by greater joys. Hence He adds, *But rejoice that your names are written in heaven.*

Bede. As if he said, It becomes you to rejoice not in the putting down of the evil spirits, but in your own exaltation. But it would be well for us to understand, that whether a man has done heavenly or earthly works, he is thereby, as if marked down by letter, for ever fixed in the memory of God.

Theophylact. For the names of the saints are written in the book of life not in ink, but in the memory and grace of God. And the devil indeed fell from above; but men being below have their names inscribed above in heaven.

Basil. (in Esai. 4.) There are some who are written indeed not in life, but according to Jeremiah in the earth, (Jer. 17:13.) that in this way there might be

a kind of double enrolment, of the one indeed to life, but of the other to destruction. But since it is said, *Let them be blotted out of the book of the living*, (Ps. 69:28.) this is spoken of those who were thought worthy to be written in the book of God. And in this way a name is said to be put down in writing or blotted out, when we turn aside from virtue to sin, or the contrary.

10:21–22

21. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

22. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

Theophylact. As a loving father rejoices to see his sons do right, so Christ also rejoices that His Apostles were made worthy of such good things. Hence it follows, *In that hour, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. He saw in truth that through the operation of the Holy Spirit, which He gave to the holy Apostles, the acquisition of many would be made, (or that many would be brought to the faith.) He is said therefore to have rejoiced in the Holy Spirit, that is, in the results which came forth through the Holy Spirit. For as one who loved mankind He considered the conversion of sinners to be a subject for rejoicing, for which He gives thanks. As it follows, *I give thanks unto thee, O Father.*

Bede. Confessing (confiteor) does not always signify penitence, but also thanksgiving, as is frequently found in the Psalms. (Ps. 18:49; 30:12; 52:9.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Now here, say they whose hearts are perverted, the Son gives thanks to the Father as being inferior. But what should prevent the Son of the same substance with the Father from praising His own Father, who saves the world by Him? But if you think that because of His giving thanks He shews Himself to be inferior, observe, that He calls Him His Father, and the Lord of heaven and earth.

Titus Bostrensis. (non occ.) For all other things have been produced by Christ from nothing, but He alone was incomprehensibly begotten of His Father; Who therefore of the Only-begotten alone, as a true Son, is by nature the Father. Hence He alone says to His Father, *I give thanks to thee, O Father, Lord, &c.* that is, I glorify thee. Marvel not that the Son glorifies the Father. For the whole substance of the Only-begotten is the glory of the Father. For both those things which were created, and the Angels, are the glory of the Creator. But since these are placed too low in respect of His dignity, the Son alone, since He is perfect God like His Father, perfectly glorifies His Father.

Athanasius. (con. Greg. Sabell. 3. con. gentes 6.) We know also that the Saviour often speaks as man. For His divine nature has human nature joined to it, yet you would not, because of His clothing Himself with a body, be ignorant that He was God. But what do they answer to this, who wish to make out a substance of evil, but form to themselves another God, other than the true Father of Christ? And they say that he is unbegotten, the creator of evil and prince of iniquity, as well as the maker of the world's fabric. (Gen. 1:1.) Now our Lord, affirming the word of Moses, says, *I give thanks unto thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth.*

Epiphanius. (adv. Hær. 42.) But a Gospel composed by Marcion has, "I give thanks to Thee, O Lord," being silent as to the words *of heaven and earth*, and the word *Father*, lest it should be supposed that He calls the Father the Creator of the heaven and the earth.

Ambrose. Lastly, he unveils the heavenly mystery by which it pleased God to reveal His grace, rather to the little ones than the wise of the world. Hence it follows, *That thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent.*

Theophylact. The distinction may be, that it is said, *the wise*, meaning, the Pharisees and Scribes who interpret the law, *and the prudent*, meaning those who were taught by the Scribes, for the wise man is he who teaches, but the prudent man he who is taught; but the Lord calls His disciples *babes*, whom He chose not from the teachers of the law, but out of the multitude, and by calling, fishermen; babes, that is, as devoid of malice.

Ambrose. Or by a babe we should here understand one who knew nothing of exalting himself, and of boasting in proud words of the excellence of his wisdom, as the Pharisees often do.

Bede. He therefore gives thanks that He had revealed to the Apostles as unto babes the sacraments of His coming, of which the Scribes and Pharisees were ignorant, who think themselves wise, and are prudent in their own sight.

Theophylact. The mysteries then were hid from those who think themselves wise, and are not; for if they had been, these would have been revealed to them.

Bede. To the wise and prudent then He opposed not the dull and foolish, but babes; that is, the humble, to shew that He condemned pride, not quickness of mind.

Origen. For a feeling of deficiency is the preparation for coming perfection. For whoever by the presence of the apparent good perceives not that he is destitute of the true good, is deprived of the true good.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 38. in Matt.) Now He does not rejoice and give thanks because the mysteries of God were hid from the Scribes and Pharisees, (for this were not a subject of rejoicing, but of lament,) but for this cause gives He thanks, that what the wise knew not, babes knew. But moreover He gives thanks to the Father, together with whom He Himself does this, to shew the great love wherewith He loves us. He explains in the next place, that the cause of this thing was first His own will and the Father's, who of His own will did this. As it follows, *Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

Gregory. (25. Moral. c. 14.) We receive these words as an example of humility, that we should not rashly presume to scan the heavenly counsel, concerning the calling of some, and the rejection of others; for that cannot be unjust which seemed good to the Just One. In all things therefore, externally disposed, the cause of the visible system is the justice of the hidden will.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 38. in Matt.) But after He had said, *I thank thee that thou hast revealed them to babes*, lest you should suppose that Christ was destitute of the power to do this, He adds, *All things are delivered to me of my Father.*

Athanasius. (Tract. in Matt. 11:22.) The followers of Arius, not rightly understanding this, rave against our Lord, saying, *If all things were given to him*, that is, the dominion of the creatures, there was a time when He had them not, and so was not of the substance of the Father. For if He had been, there would be no need for Him to receive. But hereby is their madness the rather detected. For if before He had received them, the creature was independent of the Word, how will that verse stand, *In him all things consist?* (Col. 4:17.) But if as soon as the creatures were made, they were all given to Him, where was the need to give, for *by him were all things made?* (John 13.) The dominion of the creation is not then, as they think, here meant, but the words signify the dispensation made in the flesh. For after that man sinned, all things were confounded; the Word then was made flesh, that He might restore all things. All things therefore were given Him, not because He was wanting in power, but that as Saviour He should repair all things; that as by the Word all things at the beginning were brought into being, so when the Word was made flesh, He should restore all things in Himself.

Bede. Or by the words, *All things are delivered to me*, He means not the elements of the world, but those babes to whom by the Spirit the Father made known the Sacraments of His Son; and in whose salvation when He here spoke He was rejoicing.

Ambrose. Or, when you read *all things*, you acknowledge the Almighty, not the Son lower than the Father; when you read *delivered*, you confess the Son, to whom by the nature of one substance all things rightly belong, not conferred as a gift by grace.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now having said that all things were given Him by His Father, He rises to His own glory and excellence, shewing that in nothing He is surpassed by His Father. Hence He adds, *And no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father, &c.* For the mind of the creatures is not able to comprehend the manner of the Divine substance, which passes all understanding, and His glory transcends our highest contemplations. By Itself only is known what the Divine nature is. Therefore the Father, by that which He is, knoweth the Son; the Son, by that which He is, knoweth the Father, no difference intervening as regards the Divine nature. And in another place. For that God is, we believe, but what He is by nature, is incomprehensible. But if the Son was created, how could He alone know the Father, or how could He be known only by the Father. For to know the Divine nature is impossible to any creature, but to know each created thing what it is, does not surpass every understanding, though it is far beyond our senses.

Athanasius. (Orat. 1. cont. Arian.) But though our Lord says this, it is plain that the Arians object to Him, saying, that the Father is not seen by the Son. But their folly is manifest, as if the Word did not know Itself which reveals to all men the knowledge of the Father and Itself; for it follows, *And to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*

Titus Bostrensis. Now a revelation is the communication of knowledge in proportion to each man's nature and capacity; and when indeed the nature is congenial, there is knowledge without teaching; but here the instruction is by revelation.

Origen. (non occ.) He wishes to reveal as the Word, not without the exercise of reason; and as Justice, who knoweth rightly both the times for revealing, and the measures of revelation; but He reveals by removing the opposing veil from the heart, (2 Cor. 3:15) and the darkness which He has made His secret place. (Ps. 18:11.) But since upon this men who are of another opinion think to build up their impious doctrine, that in truth the Father of Jesus was sent down to the ancient saints, we must tell them that the words, *To whomsoever the Son will reveal him*, not only refer to the future time, after our Saviour uttered this, but also to the past time. But if they will not take this word *reveal* for what is past, they must be told, that it is not the same thing to know and to believe. *To one is given by the Spirit the word of knowledge; to another faith by the same Spirit.* (1 Cor. 12:8, 9.) There were then those who believed, but did not know.

Ambrose. But that you may know that as the Son revealed the Father to whom He will, the Father also reveals the Son to whom He will, hear our Lord's words, *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

10:23–24

23. And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24. For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

Theophylact. Having said above, *No one knoweth who the Father is but the Son, and to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*; He pronounces a blessing upon His disciples, to whom the Father was revealed through Him. Hence it is said, *And he turned him unto his disciples, and said, Blessed are the eyes, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. He turns to them indeed, since He rejected the Jews, who were deaf, with their understandings blinded, and not wishing to see, and gives Himself wholly to those who love Him; and He pronounces those eyes blessed which see the things no others had seen before. We must however know this, that *seeing* does not signify the action of the eyes, but the pleasure which the mind receives from benefits conferred. For instance, if any one should say, He hath seen good times, that is, he has rejoiced in good times, according to the Psalm, *Thou shall see the good of Jerusalem.* (Ps. 128:5.) For many Jews have seen Christ performing divine works, that is to say, with their bodily sight, yet all were not fitted to receive the blessing, for they believed not; but these saw not His glory with their mental sight. Blessed then are our eyes, since we see by faith the Word who is made man for us, shedding upon us the glory of His Godhead, that He may make us like unto Him by sanctification and righteousness.

Theophylact. Now He blesses them, and all truly who look with faith, because the ancient prophets and kings desired to see and hear God in the flesh, as it follows; *For I say unto you, that many prophets and kings have desired, &c.* (Matt. 13:17.)

Bede. Matthew more clearly calls them prophets, and righteous men. For those are great kings, who have known how, not by yielding to escape from the assaults of temptations, but by mastering to gain the rule over them.

Chrysostom. (in Joan. Hom. 8.) Now from this saying many imagine that the prophets were without the knowledge of Christ. But if they desired to see what the Apostles saw, they knew that He would come to men, and dispense those things which He did. For no one desires what he has no conception of; they therefore knew the Son of God. Hence He does not merely say, *They desired to see* me, but *those things which ye see*, nor *to hear* me, but *those things which ye hear.* For they saw Him, but not yet Incarnate, nor thus conversing with men, nor speaking with such authority to them.

Bede. For those looking afar off saw Him in a glass and darkly, but the Apostles having our Lord present with them, whatever things they wished to learn had no need to he taught by angels or any other kind of vision.

Origen. (in Cant. 1:2.) But why does he say that many prophets desired, and not all? Because it is said of Abraham, *That he saw the day of Christ and was glad*, (John 8:56.) which sight not many, but few attained to; but there were other prophets and just men not so great as to reach to Abraham's vision, and the experience of the Apostles, who, He says, saw not, but desired to see.

10:25–28

25. And, behold, a certain Lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26. He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27. And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

28. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.

Bede. Our Lord had told His disciples above that their names were written in Heaven; from this it seems to me the lawyer took occasion of tempting our Lord, as it is said, *And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For there were in fact certain men who then went about the whole country of the Jews bringing charges against Christ, and saying that He spoke of the commands of Moses as useless, and Himself introduced certain strange doctrines. A lawyer then, wishing to entrap Christ into saying something against Moses, comes and tempts Him, calling Him Master, though not bearing to be His disciple. And because our Lord was wont to speak to those who came to Him concerning eternal life, the lawyer adopts this kind of language. And since he tempted Him subtly, he receives no other answer than the command given by Moses; for it follows, *He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?*

Ambrose. For he was one of those who think themselves skilled in the law, and who keep the letter of the law, while they know nothing of its spirit. From a part of the law itself our Lord proves them to be ignorant of the law, shewing that at the very first the law preached the Father and the Son, and announced the sacraments of the Lord's Incarnation; for it follows, *And he answering said, Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind.*

Basil. (in Ps. 44.) By saying, *with all thy mind*, he does not admit of any division of love to other things, for whatever love you cast on lower things necessarily takes away from the whole. For as a vessel full of liquid, whatever flows therefrom must so much diminish its fulness; so also the soul, whatever love it has wasted upon things unlawful, has so much lessened its love to God.

Gregory of Nyssa. (de Hom. Opif. c. 8.) the soul is divided into three faculties; one merely of growth and vegetation, such as is found in plants; another which relates to the senses, which is preserved in the nature of irrational animals; but the perfect faculty of the soul is that of reason, which is seen in human nature. By saying then the heart, He signified the bodily substance, that is, the vegetative; by the soul the middle, or the sensitive; but by saying the mind, the higher nature, that is, the intellectual or reflective faculty.

Theophylact. We must hereby understand that it becomes us to submit every power of the soul to the divine love, and that resolutely, not slackly. Hence it is added, *And with all thy strength.*

Maximus. To this end then the law commanded a threefold love to God, that it might pluck us away from the threefold fashion of the world, as touching possessions, glory, and pleasure, wherein also Christ was tempted.

Basil. (Reg. fus. ad int. 2.) But if any one ask how the love of God is to be obtained, we are sure that the love of God cannot be taught. For neither did we learn to rejoice in the presence of light, or to embrace life, or to love our parents and children; much less were we taught the love of God, but a certain seminal principle was implanted in us, which has within itself the cause, that man clings to God; which principle the teaching of the divine commands is wont to cultivate diligently, to foster watchfully, and to carry on to the perfection of divine grace. For naturally we love good; we love also what is our own, and akin to us; we likewise of our own accord pour forth all our affections on our benefactors. If then God is good, but all things desire that good, which is wrought voluntarily, He is by nature inherent in us, and although from His goodness we are far from knowing Him, yet from the very fact that we proceeded forth from Him, we are bound to love Him with exceeding love, as in truth akin to us; He is likewise also a greater benefactor than all whom by nature we love here. (ad int 3.). And again. The love of God then is the first and chief command, but the second, as filling up the first and filled up by it, bids us to love our neighbour. Hence it follows, *And thy neighbour as thyself.* But we have an instinct given us by God to perform this command, as who does not know that man is a kind and social animal? For nothing belongs so much to our nature as to communicate with one another, and mutually to need and love our relations. Of those things then of which in the first place He gave us the seed, He afterwards requires the fruits.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 32. in 1 Cor.) Yet observe how, almost to the same extent of obedience he requires the performance of each command, For of God he says, *with all thy heart*. Of our neighbour, *as thyself.* Which if it were diligently kept, there would be neither slave nor free man, neither conqueror nor conquered, (or rather, neither prince nor subject,) rich nor poor, nor would the devil be even known, for the chaff would rather stand the touch of fire than the devil the fervour of love; so surpassing all things is the constancy of love.

Gregory. (19. Moral. c. 14.) But since it is said, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, how is he merciful in taking compassion upon another, who still, by unrighteous living, is unmerciful to himself?

Cyril of Alexandria. When the lawyer had answered the things contained in the law, Christ, to whom all things were known, cuts to pieces his crafty nets. For it follows, *And he said to him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.*

Origen. From these words it is undoubtingly gathered, that the life which is preached according to God the Creator of the world, and the Scriptures given by Him, is life everlasting. For the Lord Himself bears testimony to the passage from Deuteronomy, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*; (Deut. 6:5.) and from Leviticus, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* (Lev. 19:18.) But these things were spoken against the followers of Valentinus, Basil, and Marcion. For what else did he wish us to do in seeking eternal life, but what is contained in the Law and the Prophets?

29. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?

30. And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31. And by chance there came down a certain Priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.

32. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him,

34. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

35. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

36. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?

37. Aud he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.

Cyril of Alexandria. The lawyer, when praised by our Saviour for having answered right, breaks forth into pride, thinking that he had no neighbour, as though there was no one to be compared to him in righteousness. Hence it is said, *But he willing to justify himself said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?* For somehow first one sin and then another takes him captive. From the cunning with which he sought to tempt Christ, he falls into pride. But here when asking, *who is my neighbour*, he proves himself to be devoid of love for his neighbour, since he did not consider any one to be his neighbour, and consequently of the love of God; *for he who loves not his brother whom he sees, cannot love God whom he does not see.* (1 John 4:20.)

Ambrose. He answered that he knew not his neighbour, because he believed not on Christ, and he who knows not Christ knows not the law, for being ignorant of the truth, how can he know the law which makes known the truth?

Theophylact. Now our Saviour defines a neighbour not in respect of actions or honour, but of nature; as if He says, Think not that because thou art righteous thou hast no neighbour, for all who partake of the same nature are thy neighbours. Be thou also their neighbour, not in place, but in affection and solicitude for them. And in addition to this, he brings forward the Samaritan as an example. As it follows, *And Jesus answering him said, A certain man went down, &c.*

Greek Expositor. (Severus) He has well used the general term. For He says not, "a certain one went down," but, *a certain man*, for his discourse was of the whole human race.

Augustine. (de Ev. l. ii. q. 19.) For that man is taken for Adam himself, representing the race of man; Jerusalem, the city of peace, that heavenly country, from the bliss of which he fell. Jericho is interpreted to be the moon, and signifies our mortality, because it rises, increases, wanes, and sets.

Pseudo-Augustine. (Hypognos. lib. 3.) Or by Jerusalem, which is by interpretation "the sight of peace," we mean Paradise, for before man sinned he was in sight of peace, that is, in paradise; whatever he saw was peace, and going thence he descended (as if brought low and made wretched by sin) into Jericho, that is, the world, in which all things that are born die as the moon.

Theophylact. Now he says not "descended," but "was descending." For human nature was ever tending downwards, and not for a time only, but throughout busied about a life liable to suffering.

Basil. This interpretation corresponds to the places, if any one will examine them. For Jericho lies in the low parts of Palestine, Jerusalem is seated on an eminence, occupying the crest of a mountain. The man then came from the high parts to the low, to fall into the hands of the robbers who infested the desert. As it follows, *And he fell among thieves.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. in loc. Ed. Lat.) First, we must needs pity the ill fortune of the man who fell unarmed and helpless among robbers, and who was so rash and unwise as to choose the road in which he could not escape the attack of robbers. For the unarmed can never escape the armed, the heedless the villain, the unwary the malicious. Since malice is ever armed with guile, fenced round with cruelty, fortified with deceit, and ready for fierce attack.

Ambrose. But who are those robbers but the Angels of night and darkness, among whom he had not fallen, unless by deviating from the divine command he had placed himself in their way.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) At the beginning of the world then the devil accomplished his treacherous attack upon man, against whom he practised the poison of deceit, and directed all the deadliness of his malice.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) He fell then among robbers, that is, the devil and his angels, who through the disobedience of the first man, stripped the race of mankind of the ornaments of virtue, and wounded him, that is, by ruining the gift of the power of free will. Hence it follows, *who stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed*, for to that man sinning he gave a wound, but to us many wounds, since to one sin which we contract we add many.

Augustine. (de q. Ev. l. ii. q. 19.) Or they stripped man of his immortality, and wounding him (by persuading to sin) left him half dead; for wherein he is able to understand and know God, man is alive, but wherein he is corrupted and pressed down by sins, he is dead. And this is what is added, *leaving him half dead.*

Pseudo-Augustine. (ubi sup.) For the half dead has his vital function (that is, free will) wounded, in that he is not able to return to the eternal life which he has lost. And therefore he lay, because he had not strength of his own sufficient to rise and seek a physician, that is, God, to heal him.

Theophylact. Or man after sin is said to be half dead, because his soul is immortal, but his body mortal, so that the half of man is under death. Or, because his human nature hoped to obtain salvation in Christ, so as not altogether to lie under death. But in that Adam had sinned death entered in the world, (Rom. 5:12.) in the righteousness of Christ death was to be destroyed.

Ambrose. Or they stripped us of the garments which we have received of spiritual grace, and so are wont to inflict wounds. For if we keep the unspotted garments we have put on, we can not feel the wounds of robbers.

Basil. Or it may be understood that they stripped us after first inflicting wounds; or wounds precede nakedness, as sin precedes the absence of grace.

Bede. But sins are called wounds, because the perfectness of human nature is violated by them. And they departed, not by ceasing to lie in wait, but by hiding the craft of their devices.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Here then was man (that is, Adam) lying destitute of the aid of salvation, pierced with the wounds of his sins, whom neither Aaron the high priest passing by could advantage by his sacrifice; for it follows, *And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side*. Nor again could his brother Moses the Levite assist him by the Law, as it follows, *And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or by the Priest and the Levite, two times are represented, namely, of the Law and the Prophets. By the Priest the Law is signified, by which the priesthood and sacrifices were appointed; by the Levites the prophecies of the Prophets, in whose times the law of mankind could not heal, because by the Law came the knowledge not the doing away of sin.

Theophylact. But He says, *passed by*, (Rom. 3:20; 8:3.) because the Law came and stood till its time foreordained, then, not being able to cure, departed. Mark also that the Law was not given with this previous intention that it should cure man, for man could not from the beginning receive the mystery of Christ. And therefore it is said, *And by chance there came a certain priest*, which expression we use with respect to those things which happen without forethought.

Augustine. (Serm. 171.) Or it is said, *passed by*, because the man who came down from Jerusalem to Jericho is believed to have been an Israelite, and the priest who came down, certainly his neighbour by birth, passed him by lying on the ground. And a Levite also came by, likewise his neighbour by birth; and he also despised him as he lay.

Theophylact. They pitied him, I say, when they thought about him, but afterwards, overcome by selfishness, they went away again. For this is signified by the word, *passed him by*.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) A Samaritan coming by, far removed by birth, very near in compassion, acted as follows, *But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came where he was, &c.* In whom our Lord Jesus Christ would have Himself typified. For Samaritan is interpreted to be keeper, and it is said of him, *He shall not slumber nor sleep who keeps Israel*; (Ps. 128:4.) *since being raised from the dead he dieth no more*. (Rom. 6:9.) Lastly, when it was said to him, *Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil*, (John 8:48.) He said He had not a devil, for He knew Himself to be the caster out of devils, He did not deny that He was the keeper of the weak.

Greek Expositor. (Severus.) Now Christ here fully calls Himself a Samaritan. For in addressing the lawyer who was glorying in the Law, He wished to express that neither Priest nor Levite, nor all they who were conversant with the Law, fulfilled the requirements of the Law, but He came to accomplish the ordinances of the Law.

Ambrose. Now this Samaritan was also coming down. *For who is he that ascended upon into heaven, but he who came down from heaven, even the Son of Man who is in heaven* (John 3:13.).

Theophylact. But He says, *journeying*, as though He purposely determined this in order to cure us.

Augustine. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, therefore[1] near to him, as it were, in likeness.

Greek Expositor. Or He came by the way. For He was a true traveller, not a wanderer; and came down to the earth for our sakes.

Ambrose. Now when He came He was made very near to us by His taking upon Himself our infirmities, He became a neighbour by bestowing compassion. Hence it follows, *And when he saw him he was moved with compassion.*

Pseudo-Augustine. (ubi sup.) Seeing him lying down weak and motionless. And therefore was He moved with compassion, because He saw in him nothing to merit a cure, but He Himself for sin condemned sin in the flesh. (Rom. 8:3.) Hence it follows, *And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine.*

Augustine. (Serm. 171.) For what so distant, what so far removed, as God from man, the immortal from the mortal, the just from sinners, not in distance of place, but of likeness. Since then He had in Him two good things, righteousness and immortality, and we two evils, that is unrighteousness, and mortality, if He had taken upon Him both our evils He would have been our equal, and with us have had need of a deliverer. That He might be then not what we are, but near us, He was made not a sinner, as thou art, but mortal like unto thee. By taking upon Himself punishment, not taking upon Himself guilt, He destroyed both the punishment and the guilt.

Augustine. (Quæst. Ev. ii. 19.) The binding up of wounds is the checking of sins; oil is the consolation of a good hope, by the pardon given for the reconciliation of man; wine is the incitement to work fervently in spirit.

Ambrose. Or, He binds up our wounds by a stricter commandment, as by oil he soothes by the remission of sin, as by wine he pricks to the heart by the denunciation of judgment.

Gregory. (20. Moral. c. 8.) Or in the wine he applies the sharpness of constraint, in the oil the softness of mercy. By wine let the corrupt parts be washed, by oil let the healing parts be assuaged; we must then mix gentleness with severity, and we must so combine the two, that those who are put under us be neither exasperated by our excessive harshness, nor be relaxed by too much kindness.

Theophylact. Or else, intercourse with man is the oil, and intercourse with God is the wine which signifies divinity, which no one can endure unmixed unless oil be added, that is, human intercourse. Hence he worked some things humanly, some divinely. He poured then in oil and wine, as having saved us both by His human and His divine nature.

Chrysostom. (Hom. in loc.) Or, *he poured in wine*, that is, the blood of His passion, *and oil*, that is, the anointing of the chrism, that pardon might be granted by His blood, sanctification be conferred by the chrism. The wounded parts are bound up by the heavenly Physician, and containing a salve within themselves, are by the working of the remedy restored to their former soundness. Having poured in wine and oil, he placed him upon His beast, as it follows, *and placing him upon his beast, &c.*

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. ii. q. 19.) His *beast* is our flesh, in which He has condescended to come to us. To be placed on the beast is to believe in the incarnation of Christ.

Ambrose. Or, He places us on His beast in that He bears our sins, and is afflicted for us, (Isai. 53:4, LXX) for man hath been made like to the beasts, (Ps. 49:12) therefore He placed us on His beast, that we might not be as horse and mule, (Ps. 32:9.) in order that by taking upon Him our body, He might abolish the weakness of our flesh.

Theophylact. Or He placed us on His beast, that is, on His body. For He hath made us His members, and partakers of His body. The Law indeed did not take in all the Moabites, and the Ammonites shall not enter into the Church of God; (Deut. 23:3.) but now in every nation he that feareth the Lord is accepted by Him, who is willing to believe and to become part of the Church. Wherefore He says, that *he brought him to an inn.*

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) For the Inn is the Church, which receives travellers, who are tired with their journey through the world, and oppressed with the load of their sins; where the wearied traveller casting down the burden of his sins is relieved, and after being refreshed is restored with wholesome food. And this is what is here said, *and took care of him.* For without is every thing that is conflicting, hurtful and evil, while within the Inn is contained all rest and health.

Bede. And rightly He brought him placed on His beast, since no one, except he be united to Christ's body by Baptism, shall enter the Church.

Ambrose. But as the Samaritan had not time to stay longer on the earth, he must needs return to the place whence he descended, as it follows, *And on the morrow he took out two pence, &c.* (Ps. 118:24.) What is that morrow, but perchance the day of our Lord's resurrection? of which it was said, *This is the day the Lord hath made.* But the two pence are the two covenants, which bear stamped on them the image of the eternal King, by the price of which our wounds are healed.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or the two pence are the two commandments of love, which the Apostles received from the Holy Spirit to preach to others; or the promise of the present life, and that which is to come.

Origen. Or the two pence seem to me to be the knowledge of the sacrament, in what manner the Father is in the Son, and the Son in the Father, which is given as a reward by the Angel to the Church that she may take more diligent care of the man entrusted to her whom in the shortness of the time He Himself had also cured. And it is promised that whatever she should spend on the cure of the half dead man, should be restored to her again, *And whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) The inn-keeper was the Apostle, who *spent more* either in giving counsel, as he says, *Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord, yet I give my judgment*; (1 Cor. 7:15.) or, in working even with his own hands, that he might not trouble any of the weak in the newness of the Gospel, (2 Thess. 3:8) though it was lawful for him to be fed from the Gospel. (1 Cor. 9:14.) Much more also did the Apostles spend, but those teachers also in their time have spent more who have interpreted both the Old and New Testament, for which they shall receive their reward.

Ambrose. Blessed then is that inn-keeper who is able to cure the wounds of another; blessed is he to whom Jesus says, *Whatsoever thou hast spent more, when I come again I will repay thee.* But when wilt thou return, O Lord, save on the Judgment day? For though Thou art ever every where, and though standing in the midst of us, art not perceived by us, yet the time will be in which all flesh shall behold Thee coming again. Thou wilt then restore what Thou owest to the blessed, whose debtor Thou art. Would that we were confident debtors, that we could pay what we had received!

Cyril of Alexandria. After what has gone before, our Lord fitly questions the lawyer; *Which of these three thinkest thou was neighbour to him who fell among thieves?* But he said, *He that shewed mercy on him.* For neither Priest nor Levite became neighbour to the sufferer, but he only who had compassion on him. For vain is the dignity of the Priesthood, and the knowledge of the Law, unless they are confirmed by good works. Hence it follows, *And Jesus saith unto him, Go and do thou likewise.*

Chrysostom. (in Heb. Hom. 10.) As if He said, If thou seest any one oppressed, say not, Surely he is wicked; but be he Gentile or Jew and need help, dispute not, he has a claim to thy assistance, into whatever evil he has fallen.

Augustine. (de. Doc. Chris. lib. i. c. 30.) Hereby we understand that he is our neighbour, to whomsoever we must shew the duty of compassion, if he need it, or would have shewn if he had needed it. From which it follows, that even he who must in his turn shew us this duty, is our neighbour. For the name of neighbour has relation to something else, nor can any one be a neighbour, save to a neighbour; but that no one is excluded to whom the office of mercy is to be denied, is plain to all; as our Lord says, *Do good to them that hate you.* (Matt. 5:44.) Hence it is clear, that in this command by which we are bid to love our neighbour, the holy angels are included, by whom such great offices of mercy are bestowed upon us. Therefore our Lord Himself wished also to be called our neighbour, representing Himself to have assisted the half dead man who lay in the way.

Ambrose. For relationship does not make a neighbour, but compassion, for compassion is according to nature. For nothing is so natural as to assist one who shares our nature.

10:38–42

38. Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house.

39. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things:

42. But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Bede. The love of God and our neighbour, which was contained above in words and parables, is here set forth in very deed and reality; for it is said, *Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village.*

Origen. The name of which village Luke indeed here omits, but John mentions, calling it Bethany. (John 11.)

Augustine. (Ser. 103.) But the Lord, who *came to his own, and his own received him not*, (John 1:12.) was received as a guest, for it follows, *And a certain woman named Martha received him into her house, &c.* as strangers are accustomed to be received. But still a servant received her Lord, the sick her Saviour, the creature her Creator. But if any should say, "O blessed are they who have been thought worthy to receive Christ into their houses," grieve not thou, for He says, *For inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* (Matt. 25:40.) But taking the form of a servant, He wished therein to be fed by servants, by reason of His condescension, not His condition. He had a body in which He was hungry and thirsty, but when He was hungry in the desert, Angels ministered to Him. (Matt. 4:11.) In wishing therefore to be fed, He came Himself to the feeder. Martha then, setting about and preparing to feed our Lord, was occupied in serving; but Mary her sister chose rather to be fed by the Lord, for it follows, *And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.*

Chrysostom. It is not said of Mary simply that she sat near Jesus, but at His feet, to shew her diligence, stedfastness, and zeal, in hearing, and the great reverence which she had for our Lord.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Now as was her humility in sitting at His feet, so much the more did she receive from Him. For the waters pour down to the lowest part of the valley, but flow away from the rising of the hill.

Basil. (Const. Mon. c. 1.) Now every work and word of our Saviour is a rule of piety and virtue. For to this end did He put on our body, that as much as we can we might imitate His conversation.

Cyril of Alexandria. By His own example then He teaches His disciples how they ought to behave in the houses of those who receive them, namely, when they come to a house, they should not remain idle, but rather fill the minds of those who receive them with sacred and divine teaching. But let those who make ready the house, go to meet their guests gladly and earnestly, for two reasons. First, indeed, they will be edified by the teaching of those whom they receive; next also they will receive the reward of charity. And hence it follows here, *But Martha was cumbered about much serving, &c.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Martha was well engaged in ministering to the bodily wants or wishes of our Lord, as of one who was mortal, but He who was clothed in mortal flesh; *in the beginning was the Word.* Behold then what Mary heard, *The Word was made flesh.* Behold then Him to whom Martha ministered. The one was labouring, the other at rest. But yet Martha, when much troubled in her occupation and business of serving, interrupted our Lord, and complained of her sister. For it follows, *And said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?* For Mary was absorbed in the sweetness of our Lord's words; Martha was preparing a feast for our Lord, in whose feast Mary was now rejoicing. While then she was listening with delight to those sweet words, and was feeding on them with the deepest affection, our Lord was interrupted by her sister. What must we suppose was her alarm, lest the Lord should say to her, "Rise, and help thy sister?" Our Lord therefore, who was not at a loss, for He had shewn He was the Lord, answered as follows, *And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha.* The repetition of the name is a mark of love, or perhaps of drawing the attention, that she should listen more earnestly. When twice called, she hears, *Thou art troubled about many things*, that is, thou art busied about many things. For man wishes to meet with something when he is serving, and can not; and thus between seeking what is wanting and preparing what is at hand, the mind is distracted. For if Martha had been sufficient of herself, she would not have required the aid of her sister. There are many, there are diverse things, which are carnal, temporal, but one is preferred to many. For one is not from many, but many from one. Hence it follows, *But one thing is needful.* Mary wished to be occupied about one, according to that, *It is good for me to cling close unto the Lord.* (Ps. 73:28.) The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, are one. To this one he does not bring us, unless we being many have one heart. (Acts 4:32.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else, when certain brethren have received God, they will not be anxious about much service, nor ask for those things which are not in their hands, and are beyond their needs. For every where and in every thing that which is superfluous is burdensome. For it begets weariness in those who are wishing to bestow it, while the guests feel that they are the cause of trouble.

Basil. (in reg. fus. int. 19.) It is foolish also to take food for the support of the body, and thereby in return to hurt the body, and to hinder it in the performance of the divine command. If then a poor man come, let him receive a model and example of moderation in food, and let us not prepare our own tables for their sakes, who wish to live luxuriously. For the life of the Christian is uniform, ever tending to one object, namely, the glory of God. But the life of those who are without is manifold and vacillating, changed about at will. And how in truth canst thou, when thou settest thy table before thy brother with profusion of meats, and for the pleasure of feasting sake, accuse him of luxury, and revile him as a glutton, censuring his indulgence in that which thou thyself affordest him? Our Lord did not commend Martha when busied about much serving.

Augustine. (Serm. 104.) What then? Must we think that blame was cast upon the service of Martha, who was engaged in the cares of hospitality, and rejoiced in having so great a guest? If this be true, let men give up ministering to the needy; in a word, let them be at leisure, intent only upon getting wholesome knowledge, taking no care what stranger is in the village in want of bread; let works of mercy be unheeded, knowledge only be cultivated.

Theophylact. Our Lord does not then forbid hospitality, but the troubling about many things, that is to say, hurry and anxiety. And mark the wisdom of our Lord, in that at first He said nothing to Martha, but when she sought to tear away her sister from hearing, then the Lord took occasion to reprove her. For hospitality is ever honoured as long as it keeps us to necessary things. But when it begins to hinder us from attending to what is of more importance, then it is plain that the hearing of the divine word is the more honourable.

Augustine. (Serm. 104.) Our Lord then does not blame the actions, but distinguishes between the duties. For it follows, *Mary hath chosen that good part, &c.* Not thine a bad one, but hers a better. Why a better? because it shall not be taken away from her. From thee the necessary burden of business shall one time be taken away. For when thou comest into that country, thou wilt find no stranger to receive with hospitality. But for thy good it shall be taken away, that what is better may be given thee. Trouble shall be taken away, that rest may be given. Thou art yet at sea; she is in port. For the sweetness of truth is eternal, yet in this life it is increased, and in the next it will be made perfect, never to be taken away.

Ambrose. May you then like Mary be influenced by the desire of wisdom. For this is the greater, this the more perfect work. Nor let the care of ministering to others turn thy mind from the knowledge of the heavenly word, nor reprove or think indolent those whom thou seest seeking after wisdom.

Augustine. (de Qu. Evang. l. ii. q. 30.) Now mystically, by Martha's receiving our Lord into her house is represented the Church which now receives the Lord into her heart. Mary her sister, who sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word, signifies the same Church, but in a future life, where ceasing from labour, and the ministering to her wants, she shall delight in Wisdom alone. But by her complaining that her sister did not help her, occasion is given for that sentence of our Lord, in which he shews that Church to be anxious and troubled about much service, when there is but one thing needful, which is yet attained through the merits of her service; but He says that Mary hath chosen the good part, for through the one the other is reached, which shall not be taken away.

Gregory. (6. Mor. c. 18.) Or by Mary who sat and heard our Lord's words, is signified the contemplative life; by Martha engaged in more outward services, the active life. Now Martha's care is not blamed, but Mary is praised, for great are the rewards of an active life, but those of a contemplative are far better. Hence Mary's part it is said will never be taken away from her, for the works of an active life pass away with the body, but the joys of the contemplative life the rather begin to increase from the end.

CHAP. 11

11:1–4

1. And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

2. And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

3. Give us day by day our daily bread.

4. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

Bede. After the account of the sisters, who signified the two lives of the Church, our Lord is not without reason related to have both Himself prayed, and taught His disciples to pray, seeing that the prayer which He taught contains in itself the mystery of each life, and the perfection of the lives themselves is to be obtained not by our own strength, but by prayer. Hence it is said, *And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Now whereas He possesses every good in abundance, why does He pray, since He is full, and has altogether need of nothing? To this we answer, that it befits Him, according to the manner of His dispensation in the flesh, to follow human observances at the time convenient for them. For if He eats and drinks, He rightly was used to pray, that He might teach us not to be lukewarm in this duty, but to be the more diligent and earnest in our prayers.

Titus Bostrensis. (in Matt.) The disciples having seen a new way of life, desire a new form of prayer, since there were several prayers to be found in the Old Testament. Hence it follows, *When he ceased, one of his disciples said to him, Lord, teach us to pray*, in order that we might not sin against God in asking for one thing instead of another, or by approaching God in prayer in a manner that we ought not.

Origen. And that he might point out the kind of teaching, the disciple proceeds, *as John also taught his disciples*. Of whom in truth thou hast told us, that among them that are born of women there had arisen none greater than he. And because thou hast commanded us to seek things that are great and eternal, whence shall we arrive at the knowledge of these but from Thee, our God and Saviour?

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. Dom. Serm. 1.) He unfolds the teaching of prayer to His disciples, who wisely desire the knowledge of prayer, directing them how they ought to beseech God to hear them.

Basil. (Const. Monast. cap. 1.) There are two kinds of prayer, one composed of praise with humiliation, the other of petitions, and more subdued. Whenever then you pray, do not first break forth into petition; but if you condemn your inclination, supplicate God as if of necessity forced thereto. And when you begin to pray, forget all visible and invisible creatures, but commence with the praise of Him who created all things. Hence it is added, *And he says unto them, When you pray, say, Our Father.*

Pseudo-Augustine. (App. Serm. 84.) The first word, how gracious is it? Thou durst not raise thy face to heaven, and suddenly thou receivest the grace of Christ. From an evil servant thou art made a good son. Boast not then of thy working, but of the grace of Christ; for therein is no arrogance, but faith. To proclaim what thou hast received is not pride, but devotion. Therefore raise thy eyes to thy Father, who begot thee by Baptism, redeemed thee by His Son. Say *Father* as a son, but claim no especial favour to thyself. Of Christ alone is He the especial Father, of us the common Father. For Christ alone He begot, but us he created. And therefore according to Matthew when it is said, *Our Father*, (Matt. 6:9.) it is added, *which art in heaven*, that is, in those heavens of which it was said, *The heavens declare the glory of God.* (Ps. 19:1.) Heaven is where sin has ceased, and where there is no sting of death.

Theophylact. But He says not, *which art in heaven*, as though He were confined to that place, but to raise the hearer up to heaven, and draw him away from earthly things.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. Dom. Serm. 2.) See how great a preparation thou needest, to be able to say boldly to God, O Father, for if thou hast thy eyes fixed on worldly things, or courtest the praise of men, or art a slave to thy passions, and utterest this prayer, I seem to hear God saying, 'Whereas thou that art of a corrupt life callest the Author of the incorruptible thy Father, thou pollutest with thy defiled lips an incorruptible name. For He who commanded thee to call Him Father, gave thee not leave to utter lies. (et serm. 3.). But the highest of all good things is to glorify God's name in our lives. Hence He adds, *Hallowed be thy name.* For who is there so debased, as when He sees the pure life of those who believe, does not glorify the name invoked in such a life. He then who says in his prayer, *Be thy name*, which I call upon, *hallowed in me*, prays this, "May I through Thy concurring aid be made just, abstaining from all evil."

Chrysostom. For as when a man gazes upon the beauty of the heavens, he says, *Glory be thee, O God*; so likewise when He beholds a man's virtuous actions, seeing that the virtue of man glorifies God much more than the heavens.

Pseudo-Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or it is said, *Hallowed be thy name*; that is, let Thy holiness be known to all the world, and let it worthily praise Thee. *For praise becometh the upright*, (Ps. 33.) and therefore He bids them pray for the cleansing of the whole world.

Cyril of Alexandria. Since among those to whom the faith has not yet come, the name of God is still despised. But when the rays of truth shall have shined upon them, they will confess the Holy of Holies. (Dan. 9:24.)

Titus Bostrensis. (ubi sup.) And because in the name of Jesus is the glory of God the Father, the name of the Father will be hallowed whenever Christ shall be known.

Origen. Or, because the name of God is given by idolaters, and those who are in error, to idols and creatures, it has not as yet been so made holy, as to be separated from those things from which it ought to be. He teaches us therefore to pray that the name of God may be appropriated to the only true God; to whom alone belongs what follows, *Thy kingdom come*, to the end that may be put down all the rule, authority, and power, and kingdom of the world, together with sin which reigns in our mortal bodies.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) We beseech also to be delivered by the Lord from corruption, to be taken out of death. Or, according to some, *Thy kingdom come*, that is, May Thy Holy Spirit come upon us to purify us.

Pseudo-Augustine. (ubi sup.) For then cometh the kingdom of God, when we have obtained His grace. For He Himself says, *The kingdom of God is within you.* (Luke 17:21.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Or they who say this seem to wish to have the Saviour of all again illuminating the world. But He has commanded us to desire in prayer that truly awful time, in order that men might know that it behoves them to live not in sloth and backwardness, lest that time bring upon them the fiery punishment, but rather honestly and according to His will, that that time may weave crowns for them. Hence it follows, according to Matthew, [a] *Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.*

Chrysostom. As if He says, Enable us, O Lord, to follow the heavenly life, that whatever Thou willest, we may will also.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. Dom. serm. 4.) For since He says that the life of man after the resurrection will be like to that of Angels, it follows, that our life in this world should be so ordered with respect to that which we hope for hereafter, that living in the flesh we may not live according to the flesh. But hereby the true Physician of the souls destroys the nature of the disease, that those who have been seized with sickness, whereby they have departed from the Divine will, may forthwith be released from the disease by being joined to the Divine will. For the health of the soul is the due fulfilment of the will of God.

Augustine. (in Enchirid. c. 116.) It seems according to the Evangelist Matthew, that the Lord's prayer contains seven petitions, but Luke has comprehended it in five. Nor in truth does the one disagree from the other, but the latter has suggested by his brevity how those seven are to be understood. For the name of God is hallowed in the spirit, but the kingdom of God is about to come at the resurrection of the body. Luke then, shewing that the third petition is in a manner a repetition of the two former, wished to make it so understood by omitting it. He then added three others. And first, of daily bread, saying, *Give us day by day our daily bread.*

Pseudo-Augustine. (App. Serm. 84.) In the Greek the word is ἐπιούσιον, that is, *something added to the substance.* (supersubstantialem) It is not that bread which goes into the body, but that bread of everlasting life, which supports the substance of our soul. But the Latins call this "daily" bread, which the Greeks call "coming to." If it is daily bread, why is it eaten a year old, as is the custom with the Greeks in the east? Take daily what profits thee for the day; so live that thou mayest daily be thought worthy to receive. The death of our Lord is signified thereby, and the remission of sins, and dost thou not daily partake of that bread of life? He who has a wound seeks to be cured; the wound is that we are under sin, the cure is the heavenly and dreadful Sacrament. If thou receivest daily, daily does "To-day" come unto thee. Christ is to thee To-day; (Heb. 13:8.) Christ rises to thee daily.

Titus Bostrensis. Or the bread of souls is the Divine power, bringing the everlasting life which is to come, as the bread which comes out of the earth preserves the temporal life. But by saying "daily," He signifies the Divine bread which comes and is to come, which we seek to be given to us daily, requiring a certain earnest and taste of it, seeing that the Spirit which dwells in us hath wrought a virtue surpassing all human virtues, as chastity, humility, and the rest.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now perhaps some think it unfit for saints to seek from God bodily goods, and for this reason assign to these words a spiritual sense. But granting that the chief concern of the saints should be to obtain spiritual gifts, still it becomes them to see that they seek without blame, according to our Lord's command, their common bread. For from the fact that He bids them ask for bread, that is daily food, it seems that He implies that they should possess nothing, but rather practise an honourable poverty. For it is not the part of those who have bread to seek it, but rather of those who are oppressed with want.

Basil. (in Reg. brev. ad inter. 252.) As if He said, For thy daily bread, namely, that which serves for our daily wants, trust not to thyself, but fly to God for it, making known to Him the necessities of thy nature.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 23. in Matt.) We must then require of God the necessities of life; not varieties of meats, and spiced wines, and the other things which please the palate, while they load thy stomach and disturb thy mind, but bread which is able to support the bodily substance, that is to say, which is sufficient only for the day, that we may take no thought of the morrow. But we make only one petition about things of sense, that the present life may not trouble us.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. Dom. Serm. 5.) Having taught us to take confidence through good works, He next teaches us to implore the remission of our offences, for it follows, *And forgive us our sins.*

Titus Bostrensis. (in Matt.) This also was necessarily added, for no one is found without sin, that we should not be hindered from the holy participation on account of man's guilt. For whereas we are bound to render unto Christ all manner of holiness, who maketh His Spirit to dwell in us, we are to be blamed if we keep not our temples clean for Him. But this defect is supplied by the goodness of God, remitting to human frailty the severe punishment of sin. And this act is done justly by the just God, when we forgive as it were our debtors, those, namely, who have injured us, and have not restored what

was due. Hence it follows, *For we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For He wishes, if I may so speak, to make God the imitator of the patience which men practise, that the kindness which they have shewn to their fellowservants, they should in like manner seek to receive in equal balance from God, who recompenses to each man justly, and knows how to have mercy upon all men.

Chrysostom. Considering then these things, we ought to shew mercy to our debtors. For they are to us if we are wise the cause of our greatest pardon; and though we perform only a few things, we shall find many. For we owe many and great debts to the Lord, of which if the least part should be exacted from us, we should soon perish.

Pseudo-Augustine. (ubi sup.) But what is the debt except sin? If thou hadst not received, thou wouldest not owe money to another. And therefore sin is imputed to you. For thou hadst money with which thou wert born rich, and made after the likeness and image of God, but thou hast lost what thou then hadst. As when thou puttest on pride thou losest the gold of humility, thou hast receipted the devil's debt which was not necessary; the enemy held the bond, but the Lord crucified it, and cancelled it with His blood. But the Lord is able, who has taken away our sins and forgiven our debts, to guard us against the snares of the devil, who is wont to produce sin in us. Hence it follows, *And lead us not into temptation*, such as we are not able to bear, but like the wrestler we wish only such temptation as the condition of man can sustain.

Titus Bostrensis. (ubi sup.) For it is imposible not to be tempted by the devil, but we make this prayer that we may not be abandoned to our temptations. Now that which happens by Divine permission, God is sometimes in Scripture said to do. And in this way by hindering not the increase of temptation which is above our strength, he leads us into temptation.

Maximus. (in Orat. Dom.) Or, the Lord commands us to pray, *Lead us not into temptation*, let us not have experience of lustful and self-induced temptations. But James teaches those who contend only for the truth, not to be unnerved by involuntary and troublesome temptations, saying, *My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.* (James 1:2.)

Basil. (in reg. brev. ad inter. 221.) It does not however become us to seek by our prayers bodily afflictions. For Christ has universally commanded men every where to pray that they enter not into temptation. But when one has already entered, it is fitting to ask from the Lord the power of enduring, that we may have fulfilled in us those words, *He that endureth to the end shall be saved.* (Mat. 10:22.)

Augustine. (in Enchirid. c. 116.) But what Matthew has placed at the end, *But deliver us from evil*, Luke has not mentioned, that we might understand it belongs to the former, which was spoken of temptation. He therefore says, *But deliver us*, not, "And deliverus," clearly proving this to be but one petition," Do not this, but this." But let every one know that he is therein delivered from evil, when he is not brought into temptation.

Pseudo-Augustine. (ubi sup.) For each man seeks to be delivered from evil, that is, from his enemies and sin, but he who gives himself up to God, fears not the devil, for *if God is for us, who can be against us?* (Rom. 8:31.)

11:5–8

5. And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6. For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?

7. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Saviour had before taught, in answer to the request of His apostles, how men ought to pray. But it might happen that those who had received this wholesome teaching, poured forth their prayers indeed according to the form given to them, but carelessly and languidly, and then when they were not heard in the first or second prayer, left off praying. That this then might not be our case, He shews by means of a parable, that cowardice in our prayers is hurtful, but it is of great advantage to have patience in them. Hence it is said, *And he says unto them, Which of you shall have a friend.*

Theophylact. God is that friend, who loveth all men, and wills that all should he saved.

Ambrose. Who is a greater friend to us, than He who delivered up His body for us? Now we have here another kind of command given us, that at all times, not only in the day, but at night, prayers should be offered up. For it follows, *And shall go into him at midnight.* (Ps. 119:62.) As David did when he said, *At midnight I will rise and give thanks unto thee.* For he had no fear of awakening them from sleep, whom he knew to be ever watching. For if David who was occupied also in the necessary affairs of a kingdom was so holy, that seven times in the day he gave praise to God, (Ps. 119:164.) what ought we to do, who ought so much the more to pray, as we more frequently sin, through the weakness of our mind and body? But if thou lovest the Lord thy God, thou wilt be able to gain favour, not only for thyself, but others. For it follows, *And say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves, &c.*

Augustine. (Serm. 105) But what are these three loaves but the food of the heavenly mystery? For it may be that one has had a friend asking for what he cannot supply him with, and then finds that he has not what he is compelled to give. A friend then comes to you on his journey, that is, in this present life, in which all are travelling on as strangers, and no one remains possessor, but to every man is told, *Pass on, O stranger, give place to him that is coming.* (Ecclus 29:27.) Or perhaps some friend or yours comes from a bad road, (that is, an evil life,) wearied and not finding the truth, by hearing and receiving which he may become happy. He comes to thee as to a Christian, and says, "Give me a reason," asking perhaps what you from the simplicity of your faith are ignorant of, and not having wherewith to satisfy his hunger, are compelled to seek it in the Lord's books. For perhaps what he asked is contained in the book, but obscure. You are not permitted to ask Paul himself, or Peter, or any prophet, for all that family is now resting with their Lord, and the ignorance of the world is very great, that is, it is midnight, and your friend who is urgent from hunger presses this, not contented with a simple faith; must he then be abandoned? Go therefore to the Lord Himself with whom the family is sleeping, *Knock, and pray*; of whom it is added, *And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not.* He delays to give, wishing that you should the more earnestly desire what is delayed, lost by being given at once it should grow common.

Basil. (Const. Mon. c. 1.) For perhaps He delays purposely, to redouble your earnestness and coming to him, and that you may know what the gift of God is, and may anxiously guard what is given. For whatever a man acquires with much pains he strives to keep safe, lest with the loss of that he should lose his labour likewise.

Gloss. (ordin.) He does not then take away the liberty of asking, but is the more anxious to kindle the desire of praying, by shewing the difficulty of obtaining that we ask for. For it follows, *The door is now shut.*

Ambrose. This is the door which Paul also requests may be opened to him, beseeching to be assisted not only by his own prayers, but those also of the people, that a door of utterance may be opened to him to speak the mystery of Christ. (Col. 4:3.) And perhaps that is the door which John saw open, and it was said to him, *Come up hither, and, I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.* (Rev. 4:1.)

Augustine. (Qu. Ev. l. ii. qu. 21.) The time then referred to is that of the famine of the word, when the understanding is shut up, (Amos 8:11.) and they who dealing out the wisdom of the Gospel as it were bread, preached throughout the world, are now in their secret rest with the Lord. And this it is which is added, *And my children are with me in bed.*

Gregory of Nyssa. Well does he call those children who by the arms of righteousness have claimed to themselves freedom from passion, shewing that the good which by practice we have acquired, had been from the beginning laid up in our nature. For when any one renouncing the flesh, by living in the exercise of a virtuous life, has overcome passion, then he becomes as a child, and is insensible to the passions. But by the bed we understand the rest of Christ.

Gloss. (ordin.) And because of what has gone before he adds, *I cannot rise and give thee*, which must have reference to the difficulty of obtaining.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 21.) Or else, the friend to whom the visit is made at midnight, for the loan of the three loaves, is evidently meant for an allegory, just as a person set in the midst of trouble might ask God that He would give him to understand the Trinity, by which he may console the troubles of this present life. For his distress is the midnight in which he is compelled to be so urgent in his request for the three. Now by the three loaves it is signified, that the Trinity is of one substance. But the friend coming from his journey is understood the desire of man, which ought to obey reason, but was obedient to the custom of the world, which he calls the way, from all things passing along it. Now when man is converted to God, that desire also is reclaimed from custom. But if not consoled by that inward joy arising from the spiritual doctrine which declares the Trinity of the Creator, he is in great straits who is pressed down by earthly sorrows, seeing that from all outward delights he is commanded to abstain, and within there is no refreshment from the delight of spiritual doctrine. And yet it is effected by prayer, that he who desires should receive understanding from God, even though there be no one by whom wisdom should be preached. For it follows, *And if that man shall continue, &c.* The argument is drawn from the less to the greater. For, if a friend rises from his bed, and gives not from the force of friendship, but from weariness, how much more does God give who without weariness gives most abundantly whatever we ask?

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But when thou shalt have obtained the three loaves, that is, the food and knowledge of the Trinity, thou hast both the source of life and of food. Fear not. Cease not. For that bread will not come to an end, but will put an end to your want. Learn and teach. Live and eat.

Theophylact. Or else, The midnight is the end of life, at which many come to God. But the friend is the Angel who receives the soul. Or, the midnight is the depth of temptations, in which he who has fallen, seeks from God three loaves, the relief of the wants of his body, soul, and spirit; through whom we run into no danger in our temptations. But the friend who comes from his journey is God Himself, who proves by temptation who has—Him, and who is weakened in temptation. But when He says, *And the door is shut*, we must understand that we ought to be prepared before temptations. But after that we have fallen into them, the gate of preparation is shut, and being found unprepared, unless God keep us, we are in danger.

11:9–13

9. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

11. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12. Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Having laid aside the metaphor, our Lord added an exhortation, and expressly urged us to ask, seek, and knock, until we receive what we are seeking. Hence he says, *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you.*

Cyril of Alexandria. The words, *I say unto you*, have the force of an oath. For God doth not lie, but whenever He makes known any thing to His hearers with an oath, he manifests the inexcusable littleness of our faith.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 23. in Matt.) Now by asking, He means prayer, but by seeking, zeal and anxiety, as He adds, *Seek, and ye shall find.* For those things which are sought require great care. And this is particularly the case with God. For there are many things which block up our senses. As then we search for lost gold, so let us anxiously seek after God. He shews also, that though He does not forthwith open the gates, we must yet wait. Hence he adds, *Knock, and it shall be opened unto you*; for if you continue seeking, you shall surely receive. For this reason, and as the door shut makes you knock, therefore he did not at once consent that you might entreat.

Greek Expositor. (Severus Antioch.) Or by the word *knock* perhaps he means seeking effectually, for one knocks with the hand, but the hand is the sign of a good work. Or these three may be distinguished in another way. For it is the beginning of virtue to ask to know the way of truth. But the second step is to seek how we must go by that way. The third step is when a man has reached the virtue to knock at the door, that he may enter upon the wide field of knowledge. All these things a man acquires by prayer. Or to ask indeed is to pray, but to seek is by good works to do things becoming our prayers. And to knock is to continue in prayer without ceasing.

Augustine. (Serm. 105.) But He would not so encourage us to ask were He not willing to give. Let human slothfulness blush, He is more willing to give than we to receive.

Ambrose. Now he who promises any thing ought to convey a hope of the thing promised, that obedience may follow commands, faith, promises. And therefore he adds, *For every one that asketh receiveth.*

Origen. But some one may seek to know, how it comes that they who pray are not heard? To which we must answer, that whose sets about seeking in the right way, omitting none of those things which avail to the obtaining of our requests, shall really receive what he has prayed to be given him. But if a man turns away from the object of a right petition, and asks not as it becomes him, he does not ask. And therefore it is, that when he does not receive, as is here promised, there is no falsehood. For so also when a master says, "Whoever will come to me, he shall receive the gift of instruction;" we understand it to imply a person going in real earnest to a master, that he may zealously and diligently devote himself to his teaching. Hence too James says, *Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss*, (James 4:3.) namely, for the sake of vain pleasures. But some one will say, Nay, when men ask to obtain divine knowledge, and to recover their virtue they do not obtain? To which we must answer, that they sought not to receive the good things for themselves, but that thereby they might reap praise.

Basil. (in Const. c. 1.) If also any one from indolence surrenders himself to his desires, and betrays himself into the hands of his enemies, God neither assists him nor hears him, because by sin he has alienated himself from God. It becomes then a man to offer whatever belongs to him, but to cry to God to assist him. Now we must ask for the Divine assistance not slackly, nor with a mind wavering to and fro, because such a one will not only not obtain what it seeks, but will the rather provoke God to anger. For if a man standing before a prince has his eye fixed within and without, lest perchance he should be punished, how much more before God ought he to stand watchful and trembling? But if when awakened by sin you are unable to pray stedfastly to the utmost of your power, check yourself, that when you stand before God you may direct your mind to Him. And God pardons you, because not from indifference, but infirmity, you cannot appear in His presence as you ought. If then you thus command yourself, do not depart until you receive. For whenever you ask and receive not, it is because your request was improperly made, either without faith, or lightly, or for things which are not good for you, or because you left off praying. But some frequently make the objection, "Why pray we? Is God then ignorant of what we have need?" He knows undoubtedly, and gives us richly all temporal things even before we ask. But we must first desire good works, and the kingdom of heaven; and then having desired, ask in faith and patience, bringing into our prayers whatever is good for us, convicted of no offence by our own conscience.

Ambrose. The argument then persuading to frequent prayer, is the hope of obtaining what we pray for. The ground of persuasion was first in the command, afterwards it is contained in that example which He sets forth, adding, *If a son shall ask bread of any of you, will he give him a stone? &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. In these words our Saviour gives us a very necessary piece of instruction. For often-times we rashly, from the impulse of pleasure, give way to hurtful desires. When we ask any such thing from God, we shall not obtain it. To shew this, He brings an obvious example from those things which are before our eyes, in our daily experience. For when thy son asks of thee bread, thou givest it him gladly, because he seeks a wholesome food. But when from want of understanding he asks for a stone to eat, thou givest it him not, but rather hinderest him from satisfying his hurtful desire. So that the sense may be, But which of you asking his father for bread, (which the father gives,) will he give him a stone? (that is, if he asked it.) There is the same argument also in the serpent and the fish; of which he adds, *Or if he asks a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?* And in like manner in the egg and scorpion, of which he adds, *Or if he ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?*

Origen. Consider then this, if the bread be not indeed the food of the soul in knowledge, without which it can not be saved, as, for example, the well planned rule of a just life. But the fish is the love of instruction, as to know the constitution of the world, and the effects of the elements, and whatever else besides wisdom treats of. Therefore God does not in the place of bread offer a stone, which the devil wished Christ to eat, nor in the place of a fish does He give a serpent, which the Ethiopians eat who are unworthy to eat fishes. Nor generally in the place of what is nourishing does he give what is not eatable and injurious, which relates to the scorpion and egg.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 22.) Or by the bread is meant charity, because we have a greater desire of it, and it is so necessary, that without it all other things are nothing, as the table without bread is mean. Opposed to which is hardness of heart, which he compared to a stone. But by the fish is signified the belief in invisible things, either from the waters of baptism, or because it is taken out of invisible places which the eye cannot reach. Because also faith, though tossed about by the waves of this world, is not destroyed, it is rightly compared to a fish, in opposition to which he has placed the serpent on account of the poison of deceit, which by evil persuasion had its first seed in the first man. Or, by the egg is understood hope. For the egg is the young not yet formed, but hoped for through cherishing, opposed to which he has placed the scorpion, whose poisoned sting is to be dreaded behind; as the contrary to hope is to look back, since the hope of the future reaches forward to those things which are before.

Augustine. (Serm. 105.) What great things the world speaks to thee, and roars them behind thy back to make thee look behind! O unclean world, why clamourest thou! Why attempt to turn him away! Thou wouldest detain him when thou art perishing, what wouldest thou if thou wert abiding for ever? Whom wouldest thou not deceive with sweetness, when bitter thou canst infuse false food?

Cyril of Alexandria. Now from the example just given he concludes, *If then ye being evil*, (i. e. having a mind capable of wickedness, and not uniform and settled in good, as God,) *know how to give good gifts; how much more shall your heavenly Father?*

Bede. Or, he calls the lovers of the world evil, who give those things which they judge good according to their sense, which are also good in their nature, and are useful to aid imperfect life. Hence he adds, *Know how to give good gifts to your children.* The Apostles even, who by the merit of their election had exceeded the goodness of mankind in general, are said to be evil in comparison with Divine goodness, since nothing is of itself good but God alone. But that which is added, *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, for which Matthew has written, *will give good things to them that ask him*, shews that the Holy Spirit is the fulness of God's gifts, since all the advantages which are received from the grace of God's gifts flow from that source.

Athanasius. (Dial. 1. de Trin.) Now unless the Holy Spirit were of the substance of God, Who alone is good, He would by no means be called good, since our Lord refused to be called good, inasmuch as He was made man.

Augustine. (Serm. 105.) Therefore, O covetous man, what seekest thou? or if thou seekest any thing else, what will suffice thee to whom the Lord is not sufficient?

14. And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.

16. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

Gloss. (non occ.) The Lord had promised that the Holy Spirit should be given to those that asked for it; the blessed effects whereof He indeed clearly shews in the following miracle. Hence it follows, *And Jesus was casting out a devil, and it was dumb.*

Theophylact. Now he is called κωφὸς, as commonly meaning one who does not speak. It is also used for one who does not hear, but more properly who neither hears nor speaks. But he who has not heard from his birth necessarily cannot speak. For we speak those things which we are taught to speak by hearing. If however one has lost his hearing from a disease that has come upon him, there is nothing to hinder him from speaking. But He who was brought before the Lord was both dumb in speech, and deaf in hearing.

Titus Bostrensis. (in Matt.) Now He calls the devil deaf or dumb, as being the cause of this calamity, that the Divine word should not be heard. For the devil, by taking away the quickness of human feeling, blunts the hearing of our soul. Christ therefore comes that He might cast out the devil, and that we might hear the word of truth. For He healed one that He might create a universal foretaste of man's salvation. Hence it follows, *And when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spake.*

Bede. But that demoniac is related by Matthew to have been not only dumb, but blind. Three miracles then were performed at the same time on one man. The blind see, the dumb speaks, and he that was possessed by a devil is set free. The like is daily accomplished in the conversion of believers, so that the devil being first cast out, they see the light, and then those mouths which were before silent are loosened to speak the praises of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now when the miracle was performed, the multitude extolled Him with loud praises, and the glory which was due to God. As it follows, *And the people wondered.*

Bede. But since the multitudes who were thought ignorant always marvelled at our Lord's actions, the Scribes and Pharisees took pains to deny them, or to pervert them by an artful interpretation, as though they were not the work of a Divine power, but of an unclean spirit. Hence it follows, *But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the prince of the devils.* Beelzebub was the God Accaron. For Beel is indeed Baal himself. But Zebub means a fly. Now he is called Beelzebub as the man of flies, from whose most foul practices the chief of the devils was so named.

Cyril of Alexandria. But others by similar darts of envy sought of him a sign from heaven. As it follows, *And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.* As if they said, "Although thou hast cast out a devil from the man, this is no proof however of Divine power. For we have not yet seen any thing like to the miracles of former times. Moses led the people through the midst of the sea, (Exod. 14) and Joshua his successor stayed the sun in Gibeon. (Josh. 10:13.) But thou hast shewn us none of these things." For to seek signs from heaven shewed that the speaker was at that time influenced by some feeling of this kind towards Christ.

11:17–20

17. But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth.

18. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

20. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 41. in Matt.) The suspicion of the Pharisees being utterly without reason, they dared not divulge it for fear of the multitude, but pondered it in their minds. Hence it is said, *But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself will be brought to desolation.*

Bede. He answered not their words but their thoughts, that so at least they might be compelled to believe in His power, who saw into the secrets of the heart.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) He did not answer them from the Scriptures, since they gave no heed to them, explaining them away falsely; but he answers them from things of every day occurrence. For a house and a city if it be divided is quickly scattered to nothing; and likewise a kingdom, than which nothing is stronger. For the harmony of the inhabitants maintains houses and kingdoms. If then, says He, I cast out devils by means of a devil, there is dissension among them, and their power perishes. Hence He adds, *But if Satan be divided against himself, how shall he stand?* For Satan resists not himself, nor hurts his soldiers, but rather strengthens his kingdom. It is then by Divine power alone that I crush Satan under my feet.

Ambrose. Herein also He shews His own kingdom to be undivided and everlasting. Those then who possess no hope in Christ, but think that He casts out devils through the chief of the devils, their kingdom, He says, is not everlasting. This also has reference to the Jewish people. For how can the kingdom of the Jews be everlasting, when by the people of the law Jesus is denied, who is promised by the law? Thus in part does the faith of the Jewish people impugn itself; the glory of the wicked is divided, by division is destroyed. And therefore the kingdom of the Church shall remain for ever, because its faith is undivided in one body.

Bede. The kingdom also of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is not divided, because it is sealed with an eternal stability. Let then the Arians cease to say that the Son is inferior to the Father, but the Holy Spirit inferior to the Son, since whose kingdom is one, their power is one also.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 23. in Matt) This then is the first answer; the second which relates to His disciples He gives as follows, *And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?* He says not, "My disciples," but *your sons*, wishing to soothe their wrath.

Cyril of Alexandria. For the disciples of Christ were Jews, and sprung from Jews according to the flesh, and they had obtained from Christ power over

unclean spirits, and delivered those who were oppressed by them in Christ's name. Seeing then that your sons subdue Satan in My name, is it not very madness to say that I have My power from Beelzebub? Ye are then condemned by the faith of your children. Hence He adds, *Therefore shall they be your judges.*

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) For since they who come forth from you are obedient unto Me, it is plain that they will condemn those who do the contrary.

Bede. Or else, By the sons of the Jews He means the exorcists of that nation, who cast out devils by the invocation of God. As if He says, If the casting out of devils by your sons is ascribed to God, not to devils, why in My case has not the same work the same cause? Therefore shall they be your judges, not in authority to exercise judgment, but in act, since they assign to God the casting out of devils, you to Beelzebub, the chief of the devils.

Cyril of Alexandria. Since then what you say bears upon it the mark of calumny, it is plain that by the Spirit of God I cast out devils. Hence He adds, *But if I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.*

Augustine. (de cons. Ev. l. ii. c. 38.) That Luke speaks of *the finger of God*, where Matthew has said, *the Spirit*, does not take away from their agreement in sense, but it rather teaches us a lesson, that we may know what meaning to give to the *finger of God*, whenever we read it in the Scriptures.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. qu. 17.) Now the Holy Spirit is called the finger of God, because of the distribution of gifts which are given through Him, to every one his own gift, whether he be of men or angels. For in none of our members is division more apparent than in our fingers.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or the Holy Spirit is called the finger of God for this reason. The Son was said to be the hand and arm of the Father, (Ps. 98:1.) for the Father worketh all things by Him. As then the finger is not separate from the hand, but by nature a part of it; so the Holy Spirit is consubstantially united to the Son, and through Him the Son does all things.

Ambrose. Nor would you think in the compacting together of our limbs any division of power to be made, for there can be no division in an undivided thing. And therefore the appellation of finger must be referred to the form of unity, not to the distinction of power.

Athanasius. (Orat. 2. con. Arian.) But at this time our Lord does not hesitate because of His humanity to speak of Himself as inferior to the Holy Spirit, saying, that He cast out devils by Him, as though the human nature was not sufficient for the casting out of devils without the power of the Holy Spirit.

Cyril of Alexandria. And therefore it is justly said, *The kingdom of God is come upon you*, that is, "If I as a man cast out devils by the Spirit of God, human nature is enriched through Me, and the kingdom of God is come."

Chrysostom. (Hom. 41. ut sup.) But it is said, *upon you*, that He might draw them to Him; as if He said, If prosperity comes to you, why do you despise your good things?

Ambrose. At the same time He shews that it is a regal power which the Holy Spirit possesses, in whom is the kingdom of God, and that we in whom the Spirit dwells are a royal house.

Titus Bostrensis. (in Matt.) Or He says, *The kingdom of God is come upon you*, signifying, "is come against you, not for you." For dreadful is the second coming of Christ to faithless Christians.

11:21–23

21. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22. But when a stronger than he shall come upon him and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23. He that is not with me is against me: and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

Cyril of Alexandria. As it was necessary for many reasons to refute the cavils of His opponents, our Lord now makes use of a very plain example, by which He proves to those who will consider it that He overcomes the power of the world, by a power inherent in Himself, saying, *When a strong man armed keepeth his palace.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 41. in Matt.) He calls the devil *a strong man*, not because he is naturally so, but referring to his ancient dominion, of which our weakness was the cause.

Cyril of Alexandria. For he used before the coming of the Saviour to seize with great violence upon the flocks of another, that is, God, and carry them as it were to his own fold.

Theophylact. The Devil's arms are all kinds of sins, trusting in which he prevailed against men.

Bede. But the world he calls his palace, which lieth in wickedness, (1 John 5:19.) wherein up to our Saviour's coming he enjoyed supreme power, because he rested in the hearts of unbelievers without any opposition. But with a stronger and mightier power Christ has conquered, and by delivering all men has cast him out. Hence it is added, *But if a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For as soon as the Word of the Most High God, the Giver of all strength, and the Lord of Hosts, was made man, He attacked him, and took away his arms.

Bede. His arms then are the craft and the wiles of spiritual wickedness, but his spoils are the men themselves, who have been deceived by him.

Cyril of Alexandria. For the Jews who had been a long time entrapped by him into ignorance of God and sin, have been called out by the holy Apostles to the knowledge of the truth, and presented to God the Father, through faith in the Son.

Basil. Christ also divides the spoil, shewing the faithful watch which angels keep over the salvation of men.

Bede. As conqueror too Christ divides the spoils, which is a sign of triumph, for leading captivity captive He gave gifts to men, ordaining some Apostles, some Evangelists, some Prophets, and some Pastors and Teachers. (Ephes. 4:8, 11.)

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Next we have the fourth answer, where it is added, *He who is not with me is against me*; as if He says, I wish to present men to God, but Satan the contrary. How then would he who does not work with Me, but scatters what is Mine, become so united with Me, as with Me to cast out devils? It follows, *And he who gathereth not with me, scattereth.*

Cyril of Alexandria. As if He said, I came to gather together the sons of God whom he hath scattered. And Satan himself as he is not with Me, tries to scatter those which I have gathered and saved. How then does he whom I use all My efforts to resist, supply Me with power?

Chrysostom. (Hom. 41. in Matt.) But if he who does not work with Me is My adversary, how much more he who opposes Me? It seems however to me that he here under a figure refers to the Jews, ranging them with the devil. For they also acted against, and scattered those whom He gathered together.

11:24–26

24. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

26. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Cyril of Alexandria. After what had gone before, our Lord proceeds to shew how it was that the Jewish people had sunk to these opinions concerning Christ, saying, *When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, &c.* For that this example relates to the Jews, Matthew has explained when he says, *Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.* (Matt. 12:45.) For all the time that they were living in Egypt in the practice of the Egyptians, there dwelt in them an evil spirit, which was drawn out of them when they sacrificed the lamb as a type of Christ, and were sprinkled with its blood, and so escaped the destroyer.

Ambrose. The comparison then is between one man and the whole Jewish people, from whom through the Law the unclean spirit had been cast out. But because in the Gentiles, whose hearts were first barren, but afterwards in baptism moistened with the dew of the Spirit, the devil could find no rest because of their faith in Christ, (for to the unclean spirits Christ is a flaming fire,) he then returned to the Jewish people. Hence it follows, *And finding none, he saith, I will return to my house whence I came.*

Origen. That is, to those who are of Israel, whom he saw possessing nothing divine in them, but desolate, and vacant for him to take up his abode there; and so it follows, *And when he came, he findeth it swept and garnished.*

Ambrose. For Israel being adorned with a mere outward and superficial beauty, remains inwardly the more polluted in her heart. For she never quenched or allayed her fires in the water of the sacred fountain, and rightly did the unclean spirit return to her, bringing with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. Hence it follows, *And he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there.* Seeing that in truth she has sacrilegiously profaned the seven weeks of the Law, (i. e. from Easter to Pentecost,) and the mystery of the eighth day. Therefore as upon us is multiplied the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit, so upon them falls the whole accumulated attack of the unclean spirits. For the number seven is frequently taken to mean the whole.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 43. in Matt.) Now the evil spirits who dwell in the souls of the Jews, are worse than those in former times. For then the Jews raged against the Prophets, now they lift up their hands against the Lord of the Prophets, and therefore suffered worse things from Vespasian and Titus than in Egypt and Babylon. Hence it follows, *And the last state of that man is worse than the former.* Then too they had with them the Providence of God, and the grace of the Holy Spirit; but now they are deprived even of this protection, so that there is now a greater lack of virtue, and their sorrows are more intense, and the tyranny of the evil spirits more terrible.

Cyril of Alexandria. The last state also is worse than the first, according to the words of the Apostle, *It were better not to have known the way of truth, than after they have known it to turn back from it.* (2 Pet. 2:21.)

Bede. This may also be taken to refer to certain heretics or schismatics, or even to a bad Catholic, from whom at the time of his baptism the evil spirit had gone out. And he wanders about in dry places, that is, his crafty device is to try the hearts of the faithful, which have been purged of all unstable and transient knowledge, if he can plant in them any where the footsteps of his iniquity. But he says, *I will return to my house whence I came out.* And here we must beware lest the sin which we supposed extinguished in us, by our neglect overcome us unawares. But he finds his house swept and garnished, that is, purified by the grace of baptism from the stain of sin, yet replenished with no diligence in good works. By the seven evil spirits which he takes to himself, he signifies all the vices. And they are called more wicked, because he will have not only those vices which are opposed to the seven spiritual virtues, but also by his hypocrisy he will pretend to have the virtues themselves.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Let us receive the words which follow, as said not only to them, but also to ourselves, *And the last state of that man shall be worse than the first*; for if enlightened and released from our former sins we again return to the same course of wickedness, a heavier punishment will await our latter sins.

Bede. It may also be simply understood, that our Lord added these words to shew the distinction between the works of Satan and His own, that in truth He is ever hastening to cleanse what has been defiled, Satan to defile with still greater pollution what has been cleansed.

11:27–28

27. And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

28. But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

Bede. While the Scribes and Pharisees were tempting our Lord, and uttering blasphemies against Him, a certain woman with great boldness confessed

His incarnation, as it follows, *And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, &c.* by which she refutes both the calumnies of the rulers present, and the unbelief of future heretics. For as then by blaspheming the works of the Holy Spirit, the Jews denied the true Son of God, so in after times the heretics, by denying that the Evervirgin Mary, by the cooperating power of the Holy Spirit, ministered of the substance of her flesh to the birth of the only-begotten Son, have said, that we ought not to confess Him who was the Son of man to be truly of the same substance with the Father. But if the flesh of the Word of God, who was born according to the flesh, is declared alien to the flesh of His Virgin Mother, what cause is there why the womb which bare Him and the paps which gave Him suck are pronounced blessed? By what reasoning do they suppose Him to be nourished by her milk, from whose seed they deny Him to be conceived? Whereas according to the physicians, from one and the same fountain both streams are proved to flow. But the woman pronounces blessed not only her who was thought worthy to give birth from her body to the Word of God, but those also who have desired by the hearing of faith spiritually to conceive the same Word, and by diligence in good works, either in their own or the hearts of their neighbours, to bring it forth and nourish it; for it follows, *But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 44. in Matt.) In this answer He sought not to disown His mother, but to shew that His birth would have profited her nothing, had she not been really fruitful in works and faith. But if it profited Mary nothing that Christ derived His birth from her, without the inward virtue of her heart, much less will it avail us to have a virtuous father, brother, or son, while we ourselves are strangers to virtue.

Bede. But she was the mother of God, and therefore indeed blessed, in that she was made the temporal minister of the Word becoming incarnate; yet therefore much more blessed that she remained the eternal keeper of the same ever to be beloved Word. But this expression startles the wise men of the Jews, who sought not to hear and keep the word of God, but to deny and blaspheme it.

11:29–32

29. And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them; for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.

32. The men of Nineve shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Bede. Our Lord had been assailed with two kinds of questions, for some accused Him of casting out devils through Beelzebub, to whom up to this point His answer was addressed; and others tempting Him, sought from Him a sign from heaven, and these He now proceeds to answer. As it follows, *And when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, This is an evil generation, &c.*

Ambrose. That you may know that the people of the Synagogue are treated with dishonour, while the blessedness of the Church is increased. But as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of man be to the Jews. Hence it is added, *They seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given them but the sign of Jonas the prophet.*

Basil. (in Esai. 7.) A sign is a thing brought openly to view, containing in itself the manifestation of something hidden, as the sign of Jonas represents the descent to hell, the ascension of Christ, and His resurrection from the dead. Hence it is added, *For as Jonas was a sign to the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.* He gives them a sign, not from heaven, because they were unworthy to see it, but from the lowest depths of hell; a sign, namely, of His incarnation, not of His divinity; of His passion, not of His glorification.

Ambrose. Now as the sign of Jonas is a type of our Lord's passion, so also is it a testimony of the grievous sins which the Jews have committed. We may remark at once both the mighty voice of warning, and the declaration of mercy. For by the example of the Ninevites both a punishment is denounced, and a remedy promised. Hence even the Jews ought not to despair of pardon, if they will but practise repentance.

Theophylact. Now Jonas after he came forth from the whale's belly converts the men of Nineveh by his preaching, but when Christ rose again, the Jewish nation believed not. So there was a sentence already passed upon them, of which there follows a second example, as it is said, *The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them.*

Bede. Not certainly by any authority to judge, but by the contrast of a better deed. As it follows, *For she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.* Hic in this place is not the pronoun, but the adverb of place, that is, "there is one present among you who is incomparably superior to Solomon." He said not, "I am greater than Solomon," that he might teach us to be humble, though fruitful in spiritual graces. As if he said, "The barbarian woman hastened to hear Solomon, taking so long a journey to be instructed in the knowledge of visible living creatures, and the virtues of herbs. But ye when ye stand by and hear Wisdom herself teaching you invisible and heavenly things, and confirming her words with signs and wonders, are strangers to the word, and senselessly disregard the miracles."

Bede. But if the queen of the South, who doubtless is of the elect, shall rise up in judgment together with the wicked, we have a proof of the one resurrection of all men, good as well as bad, and that not according to Jewish fables to happen a thousand years before the judgment, but at the judgment itself.

Ambrose. Herein also while condemning the Jewish people, He strongly expresses the mystery of the Church, which in the queen of the South, through the desire of obtaining wisdom, is gathered together from the uttermost parts of the whole earth, to hear the words of the Peacemaking Solomon; a queen plainly whose kingdom is undivided, rising up from different and distant nations into one body.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Hom. 7. Cant.) Now as she was queen of the Ethiopians, and in a far distant country, so in the beginning the Church of the Gentiles was in darkness, and far off from the knowledge of God. But when Christ the Prince of peace shone forth, the Jews being still in darkness, thither came the Gentiles, and offered to Christ the frankincense of piety, the gold of divine knowledge, and precious stones, that is, obedience to His commands.

Theophylact. Or because the South is praised in Scripture as warm and life-giving, therefore the soul reigning in the south, that is, in all spiritual conversation, comes to hear the wisdom of Solomon, the Prince of peace, the Lord our God, (i. e. is raised up to contemplate Him,) to whom no one shall come except he reign in a good life. But He brings next an example from the Ninevites, saying, *The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it.*

Chrysostom. (non occ.) The judgment of condemnation comes from men like or unlike to those who are condemned. From like, for instance, as in the parable of the ten virgins, but from unlike, when the Ninevites condemn those who lived at the time of Christ, that so their condemnation might be the more remarkable. (Hom. 43. in Matt.). For the Ninevites indeed were barbarians, but these Jews. The one enjoying the prophetic teaching, the other having never received the divine word. To the former came a servant, to the latter the Master, of whom the one foretold destruction, the other preached the kingdom of heaven. To all men then was it known that the Jews ought rather to have believed, but the contrary happened; therefore he adds, *For they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*

Ambrose. Now in a mystery, the Church consists of two things, either ignorance of sin, which has reference mainly to the queen of the South, or ceasing to sin, which relates indeed to the repentant Ninevites. For repentance blots out the offence, wisdom guards against it.

Augustine. (de Cons. Ev. lib. ii. c. 39.) Luke indeed relates this in the same place as Matthew, but in a somewhat different order. But who does not see that it is an idle question, in what order our Lord said those things, seeing that we ought to learn by the most precious authority of the Evangelist, that there is no falsehood. But not every man will repeat another's words in the same order in which they proceeded from his mouth, seeing that the order itself makes no difference with respect to the fact, whether it be so or not.

11:33–36

33. No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light.

34. The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

35. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Jews said, that our Lord performed His miracles not for faith, i. e. that they might believe on Him, but to gain the applause of the spectators, i. e. that He might have more followers. He refutes therefore this calumny, saying, *No man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick.*

Bede. Our Lord here speaks of Himself, shewing that although He had said above that no sign should be given to this wicked generation but the sign of Jonas, yet the brightness of His light should by no means be hid from the faithful. He Himself indeed lights the candle, who filled the vessel of our nature with the fire of His divinity; and this candle surely He wished neither to hide from believers, nor to place under a bushel, that is, enclose it in the measure of the law, or confine it within the limits of the single nation of the Jews. But He placed it upon a candlestick, that is, the Church, for He has imprinted on our foreheads the faith of His incarnation, that they who with a true faith wish to enter the Church, might be able to see clearly the light of the truth. Lastly, He bids them remember to cleanse and purify not only their works, but their thoughts, and the intentions of the heart. For it follows, *The light of the body is the eye.*

Ambrose. Either faith is the light, as it is written, *Thy word, O Lord, is a lantern to my feet.* (Ps. 119:105.) For the word of God is our faith. But a lantern cannot shine except it has received its quality from something else. Hence also the powers of our mind and senses are enlightened, that the piece of money which had been lost may be found. Let no one then place faith under the law, for the law is bound by certain limits, grace is unlimited; the law obscures, grace makes clear.

Theophylact. Or else, because the Jews, seeing the miracles, accused them out of the malice of their heart, therefore our Lord tells them, that, receiving the light, that is, their understanding, from God, they were so darkened with envy, as not to recognise His miracles and mercies. But to this end received we our understanding from God, that we should place it upon a candlestick, that others also who are entering in may see the light. The wise man indeed has already entered, but the learner is still walking. As if He said to the Pharisees, You ought to use your understanding to know the miracles, and declare them to others, seeing that what you see are the works not of Beelzebub, but the Son of God. Therefore, keeping up the meaning, He adds, *The light of the body is the eye.*

Origen. For He gives the name of the eye especially to our understanding, but the whole soul, although not corporeal, He metaphorically calls the body. For the whole soul is enlightened by the understanding.

Theophylact. But as if the eye of the body be light the body will be light, but if dark the body will be dark also, so is it with the understanding in relation to the soul. Hence it follows, *If thine eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light; but if evil, thy whole body will be full of darkness.*

Origen. For the understanding from its very beginning desires only singleness, containing no dissimulation, or guile, or division in itself.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 20. in Matt.) If then we have corrupted the understanding, which is able to let loose the passions, we have done violence to the whole soul, and suffer dreadful darkness, being blinded by the perversion of our understanding. Therefore adds he, *Take heed, therefore, that the light which is in thee be not darkness.* He speaks of a darkness which may be perceived, but which has its origin within itself, and which we every where carry about with us, the eye of the soul being put out. Concerning the power of this light He goes on to say, *If thy whole body therefore be full of light, &c. &c.*

Origen. That is, If thy material body, when the light of a candle shines upon it, is made full of light, so that not one of thy members is any longer in darkness; much more when thou sinnest not, shall thy whole spiritual body be so full of light, that its brightness may be compared to the shining of a

candle, while the light which was in the body, and which used to be darkness, is directed whithersoever the understanding may command.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Epist. 41.) Or else; The light and eye of the Church is the Bishop. It is necessary then that as the body is rightly directed as long as the eye keeps itself pure, but goes wrong when it becomes corrupt, so also with respect to the Prelate, according to what his state may be, must the Church in like manner suffer shipwreck, or be saved.

Gregory. (28. Mor. c. 12.) Or else; By the name body each particular action is understood which follows its own intention, as it were the eye of the spectators. Therefore it is said, *The light of the body is the eye*, because by the ray of a good intention the deserving parts of an action receive light. If then thy eye be single, thy whole body will be full of light, for if we intend rightly in singleness of heart, we accomplish a good work, even though it seem not to be good. And if thy eye be evil, thy whole body will be full of darkness, because when with a crooked intention even a right thing is done, although it appears to glitter in men's sight, yet before the bar of the internal judge it is covered with darkness. Hence too it is rightly added, *Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness*. For if what we think we do well we cloud by a bad intention, how many are the evils themselves which even when we do them we know to be evil?

Bede. Now when He adds, *If thy whole body therefore, &c.* by the whole of our body He means all our works. If then thou hast done a good work with a good intention, having in thy conscience nothing approaching to a dark thought, though it chance that thy neighbour is injured by thy good actions, nevertheless for thy singleness of heart shalt thou be rewarded with grace here, and with glorious light hereafter; which he signifies, adding, *And as the bright shining of a candle shall it give thee light*. These words were especially directed against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who sought for signs that they might catch him.

11:37–44

37. And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him, and he went in, and sat down to meat.

38. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.

40. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?

41. But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you.

42. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

43. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Pharisee, while our Lord still continued on speaking, invites Him to his own house. As it is said, *And while he was speaking, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him.*

Bede. Luke expressly says, *And as he spake these things*, to shew that He had not quite finished what He had purposed to say, but was somewhat interrupted by the Pharisee asking Him to dine.

Augustine. (de Con. Evan. lib. ii. c. 40.) For in order to relate this, Luke has made a variation from Matthew, at that place where both had mentioned what our Lord said concerning the sign of Jonah, and the queen of the south, and the unclean spirit; after which discourse Matthew says, *While he yet talked to the people, behold his mother and his brethren stood without desiring to speak to him*; but Luke having also in that discourse of our Lord related some of our Lord's sayings which Matthew omitted, now departs from the order which he had hitherto kept with Matthew.

Bede. Accordingly, after that it was told Him that His mother and brethren stood without, and He said, *For he that doeth the will of God, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother*, we are given to understand that He by the request of the Pharisee went to the dinner.

Cyril of Alexandria. For Christ, knowing the wickedness of those Pharisees, Himself purposely condescends to be occupied in admonishing them, after the manner of the best physicians, who bring remedies of their own making to those who are dangerously ill. Hence it follows, *And he went in and sat down to meat*. But what gave occasion for the words of Christ was, that the ignorant Pharisees were offended, that while men thought Him to be a great man and a prophet, He conformed not to their unreasonable customs. Therefore it is added, *But the Pharisee began to think and say within himself, Why had he not first washed before dinner?*

Augustine. (Serm. 106.) For every day before dinner the Pharisees washed themselves with water, as if a daily washing could be a cleansing of the heart. But the Pharisee thought within himself, yet did not give utterance to a word; nevertheless, He heard who perceived the secrets of the heart. Hence it follows, *And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Now our Lord might also have used other words to admonish the foolish Pharisee, but he seizes the opportunity and framed his reproof from the things that were ready before him. At the hour, namely, of meals He takes for His example the cup and the platter, pointing out that it became the sincere servants of God to be washed and clean, not only from bodily impurity, but also from that which lies concealed within the power of the soul, just as any of the vessels which are used for the table ought to be free from all inward defilement.

Ambrose. Now mark that our bodies are signified by the mention of earthly and fragile things, which when let fall a short distance are broken to pieces, and those things which the mind meditates within, it easily expresses through the senses and actions of the body, just as those things which the cup contains within make a glitter without. Hence also hereafter, by the word cup doubtless the passion of the body is spoken of. You perceive then, that

not the outside of the cup and platter defiles us, but the inner parts. For he said, *But your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.*

Augustine. (Serm. 106.) But how was it that He spared not the man by whom He was invited? Yea rather, He spared him by reproof, that when corrected He might spare him in the judgment. Further, He shews us that baptism also which is once given cleanses by faith; but faith is something within, not without. The Pharisees despised faith, and used washings which were without; while within they remained full of pollution. The Lord condemns this, saying, *Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?*

Bede. As if He says, He who made both natures of man, will have each to be cleansed. This is against the Manicheans, who think the soul only was created by God, but the flesh by the devil. It is also against those who abominate the sins of the flesh, such as fornication, theft, and the like; while those of the Spirit, which are no less condemned by the Apostle, they disregard as trifling.

Ambrose. Now our Lord as a good Master taught us how we ought to purify our bodies from defilement, saying, *But rather give alms of such things as ye have over: and, behold, all things are clean unto you.* You see what the remedies are; almsgiving cleanseth us, the word of God cleanseth us, according to that which is written, *Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.* (John 15:3.)

Cyprian. (de Op. et Eleem.) The Merciful bids us to shew mercy; and because He seeks to save those whom He has redeemed at a great price, He teaches that they who have been defiled after the grace of baptism may again be made clean.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 72. in Joan.) Now He says, *give alms*, not injury. For almsgiving is that which is free from all injury. It makes all things clean, and is more excellent than fasting; which though it be the more painful, the other is the more profitable. It enlightens the soul, enriches it, and makes it good and beautiful, He who resolves to have compassion on the needy, will sooner cease from sin. For as the physician who is in the habit of healing the diseased is easily grieved by the misfortunes of others; so we, if we have devoted ourselves to the relief of others, shall easily despise things present, and be raised up to heaven. The unction of almsgiving then is no slight good, since it is capable of being applied to every wound.

Bede. (quod superest.) He speaks of "what is over and above" our necessary food and clothing. For you are not commanded to give alms so as to consume yourself by want, but that after satisfying your wants, you should supply the poor to the utmost of your power. Or it must be taken in this way. Do that which remains within your power, that is, which is the only remedy remaining to those who have been hitherto engaged in so much wickedness; give alms. Which word applies to every thing which is done with profitable compassion. For not he alone gives alms who gives food to the hungry and things of that kind, but he also who gives pardon to the sinner, and prays for him, and reproves him, visiting him with some correcting punishment.

Theophylact. Or He means, "That which is uppermost." For wealth rules the covetous man's heart.

Ambrose. The whole then of this beautiful discourse is directed to this end, that while it invites us to the study of simplicity, it should condemn the luxury and worldliness of the Jews. And yet even they are promised the abolition of their sins if they will follow mercy.

Augustine. (Serm. 106.) But if they cannot be cleansed except they believe on Him who cleanses the heart by faith, what is this which He says, *Give alms, and behold all things are clean to you?* Let us give heed, and perhaps He Himself explains it to us.

For the Jews withdrew a tenth part from all their produce, and gave it in alms, which rarely a Christian does. Therefore they mocked Him, for saying this to them as to men who did not give alms. God knowing this adds, *But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God.* This then is not giving alms. For to give alms is to shew mercy. If thou art wise, begin with thyself: for how art thou merciful to another, if cruel to thyself? Hear the Scripture, which says unto thee, *Have mercy on thy own soul, and please God.* (Ecclus. 30:23.) Return unto thy conscience, thou that livest in evil or unbelief, and then thou findest thy soul begging, or perhaps struck dumb with want. In judgment and love give alms to thy soul. What is judgment? Do what is displeasing to thyself. What is charity? Love God, love thy neighbour. If thou neglectest this alms, love as much you like, thou doest nothing, since thou doest it not to thyself.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or He says it by way of censure upon the Pharisees, who ordered those precepts only to be strictly observed by their people, which were the cause of fruitful returns to themselves. Hence they omitted not even the smallest herbs, but despised the work of inspiring love to God, and the just awarding of judgment.

Theophylact. For because they despised God, treating sacred things with indifference, He commands them to have love to God; but by judgment He implies the love of our neighbour. For when a man judges his neighbour justly, it proceeds from his love to him.

Ambrose. Or judgment, because they do not bring to examination every thing that they do; charity, because they love not God with their heart. But that He might not make us zealous of the faith, to the neglect of good works, He sums up the perfection of a good man in a few words, *these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 73. in Matt.) Where indeed the subject treated was the Jewish cleansing, He altogether passed it by, but as the tithe is a kind of almsgiving, and the time was not yet come for absolutely destroying the customs of the law, therefore He says, *these ought ye to have done.*

Ambrose. He reproves also the arrogance of the boasting Jews in seeking the preeminence: for it follows, *Woe unto you, Pharisees, for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. By means of those things for which He blames us He makes us better. For He would have us be free from ambition, and not desire after vain show rather than the reality, which the Pharisees were then doing. For the greetings of men, and the rule over them, do not move us to be really useful, for these things fall to men though they be not good men. Therefore he adds, *Woe unto you, who are as graves which appear not.* For in wishing to receive greetings from men and to exercise authority over them, that they might be accounted great, they differ not from hidden graves, which glitter indeed with outward ornaments, but within are full of all uncleanness.

Ambrose. And like *graves which appear not*, they deceive by their outside beauty, and by their look impose upon the passers by; as it follows, *And the men that walk over them are not aware of them*; so much that in truth, though they give outward promise of what is beautiful, inwardly they enclose all manner of pollution.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 73.) But that the Pharisees were so, cannot be wondered at. But if we who are counted worthy to be the temples of God suddenly become graves full only of corruption, this is indeed the lowest wretchedness.

Cyril of Alexandria. (con. Julian. lib. 10.) Now here the apostate Julian says, that we must avoid graves which Christ says are unclean; but he knew not the force of our Saviour's words, for He did not command us to depart from the graves, but likened to them the hypocritical people of the Pharisees.

11:45–54

45. Then answered one of the Lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.

46. And he said, Woe unto you also, ye Lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47. Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute:

50. That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51. From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52. Woe unto you, Lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye enter not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53. And as he said these things unto them, the Scribes and Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things:

54. Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

Cyril of Alexandria. A reproof which exalts the meek is generally hateful to the proud man. When therefore our Saviour was blaming the Pharisees for transgressing from the right path, the body of Lawyers were struck with consternation. Hence it is said, *Then answered one of the Lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.*

Bede. In what a grievous state is that conscience, which hearing the word of God thinks it a reproach against itself, and in the account of the punishment of the wicked perceives its own condemnation.

Theophylact. Now the Lawyers were different from the Pharisees. For the Pharisees being separated from the rest had the appearance of a religious sect; but those skilled in the Law were the Scribes and Doctors who solved legal questions.

Cyril of Alexandria. But Christ brings a severe charge against the Lawyers, and subdues their foolish pride, as it follows, *And he said, Woe unto you also, ye Lawyers, for ye lade men, &c.* He brings forward an obvious example for their direction. The Law was burdensome to the Jews as the disciples of Christ confess, but these Lawyers binding together legal burdens which could not be borne, placed them upon those under them, taking care themselves to have no toil whatever.

Theophylact. As often also as the teacher does what he teaches, he lightens the load, offering himself for an example. But when he does none of the things which he teaches others, the loads appear heavy to those who learn his teaching, as being what even their teacher is not able to bear.

Bede. Now they are rightly told that they would not touch the burdens of the Law even with one of their fingers, that is, they fulfil not in the slightest point that law which they pretend to keep and transmit to the keeping of others, contrary to the practice of their fathers, without faith and the grace of Christ.

Gregory of Nyssa. So also are there now many severe judges of sinners, yet weak combatants; burdensome imposers of laws, yet weak bearers of burdens; who wish neither to approach nor to touch strictness of life, though they sternly exact it from their subjects.

Cyril of Alexandria. Having then condemned the burdensome dealing of the Lawyer, He brings a general charge against all the chief men of the Jews, saying, *Woe to you who build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.*

Ambrose. This is a good answer to the foolish superstition of the Jews, who in building the tombs of the prophets condemned the deeds of their fathers, but by rivalling their fathers' wickedness, throw back the sentence upon themselves. For not the building but the imitation of their deeds is looked upon as a crime. Therefore He adds, *Truly ye bear witness that ye allow, &c.*

Bede. They pretended indeed, in order to win the favour of the multitude, that they were shocked at the unbelief of their fathers, since by splendidly honouring the memories of the prophets who were slain by them they condemned their deeds. But in their very actions they testify how much they coincide with their fathers' wickedness, by treating with insult that Lord whom the prophets foretold. Hence it is added, *Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute.*

Ambrose. The wisdom of God is Christ. The words indeed in Matthew are, *Behold I send unto you prophets and wise men.*

Bede. But if the same Wisdom of God sent prophets and Apostles, let heretics cease to assign to Christ a beginning from the Virgin; let them no longer declare one God of the Law and Prophets, another of the New Testament. For although the Apostolic Scripture often calls by the name of prophets not only those who foretell the coming Incarnation of Christ, but those also who foretell the future joys of the kingdom of heaven, yet I should never suppose that these were to be placed before the Apostles in the order of enumeration.

Athanasius. (Apol. 1. de fuga sua.) Now if they kill, the death of the slain will cry out the louder against them; if they pursue, they send forth memorials of their iniquity, for flight makes the pursuit of the sufferers to redound to the great disgrace of the pursuers. For no one flees from the merciful and gentle, but rather from the cruel and evil-minded man. And therefore it follows, *That the blood of all the prophets who have been slain from the foundation of the world may be required of this generation.*

Bede. It is asked, How comes it that the blood of all the prophets and just men is required of the single generation of the Jews; whereas many of the saints, both before the Incarnation and after, have been slain by other nations? But it is the manner of the Scriptures frequently to reckon two generations of men, one of the good, and the other of the evil.

Cyril of Alexandria. Although then He says pointedly of this generation, He expresses not merely those who were then standing by Him and listening, but every manslayer. For like is attributed to like.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 74. in Matt.) But if He means that the Jews are about to suffer worse things, this will not be undeserved, for they have dared to do worse than all. And they have been corrected by none of their past calamities, but when they saw others sin, and punished, they were not made better, but did likewise; yet it will not be that one shall suffer punishment for the sins of others.

Theophylact. But our Lord shews that the Jews have inherited the malice of Cain, since he adds, *From the blood of Abel, to the blood of Zacharias, &c.* Abel, inasmuch as he was slain by Cain; but Zacharias, whom they slew between the temple and the altar, some say was the Zacharias of old time, the son of Jehoiadah the Priest.

Bede. Why He begins *from the blood of Abel*, who was the first martyr, we need not wonder; but why, *to the blood of Zacharias*, is a question, since many were slain after him even up to our Lord's birth, and soon after His birth the Innocents, unless perhaps it was because Abel was a shepherd, Zacharias a Priest. And the one was killed in the field, the other in the court of the temple, martyrs of each class, that is, under their names are shadowed both laymen, and those engaged in the office of the altar.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. in Diem Nat. Christi.) But some say that Zacharias, the father of John, by the spirit of prophecy forecasting the mystery of the immaculate virginity of the mother of God, in no wise separated her from the part of the temple set apart for virgins, wishing to shew that it was in the power of the Creator of all things to manifest a new birth, while he did not deprive the mother of the glory of her virginity. Now this part was between the altar and the temple, in which was placed the brazen altar, where for this reason they slew him. It is said also, that when they heard the King of the world was about to come, from fear of subjection they designedly attacked him who bore witness to His coming, and slew the priest in the temple.

Greek Expositor. (Geometer.) But others give another reason for the destruction of Zacharias. For at the murder of the children the blessed John was to be slain with the rest of the same age, but Elisabeth, snatching up her son from the midst of the slaughter, sought the desert. And so when Herod's soldiers could not find Elisabeth and the child, they turn their wrath against Zacharias, killing him as he was ministering in the temple.

It follows, *Woe to you, lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge.*

Basil. (in Esai. 1.) This word *woe*, which is uttered with pain intolerable, is suited to those who were shortly after to be cast out into grievous punishment.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now we say, the law itself is the key of knowledge. For it was both a shadow and a figure of the righteousness of Christ, therefore it became the Lawyers, as instructors of the Law of Moses and the words of the Prophets, to reveal in a certain measure to the Jewish people the knowledge of Christ. This they did not, but on the contrary detracted from the divine miracles, and spoke against His teaching, *Why hear ye him?* So then they took away the key of knowledge. Hence it follows, *Ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entered in ye hindered.* But faith also is the key of knowledge. For by faith comes also the knowledge of truth, according to that of Isaiah, *Unless ye have believed, ye will not understand.* (Isa. 7:9. LXX.) The Lawyers then have taken away the key of knowledge, not permitting men to believe in Christ.

Augustine. (de qu. Ev. l. ii. q. 23.) But the key of knowledge is also the humility of Christ, which they would neither themselves understand, nor let be understood by others.

Ambrose. Those also are even now condemned under the name of Jews, and made subject to future punishment, who, while usurping to themselves the teaching of divine knowledge, both hinder others, and do not themselves acknowledge that which they profess.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. lib. ii. c. 75.) Now all these things Matthew records to have been said after our Lord had come into Jerusalem. But Luke relates them here, when our Lord was yet on His journey to Jerusalem. From which they appear to me to be similar discourses, of which Matthew has given one, Luke the other.

Bede. But how true were the charges of unbelief, hypocrisy, and impiety, brought against the Pharisees and Lawyers they themselves testify, striving not to repent, but to entrap the Teacher of truth; for it follows, *And as he said these things to them, the Pharisees and Lawyers began to urge him vehemently.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Now this urging is taken to mean pressing upon Him, or threatening Him, or waxing furious against Him. But they began to interrupt His words in many ways, as it follows, *And to force him to speak of many things.*

Theophylact. For when several are questioning a man on different subjects, since he can not reply to all at once, foolish people think he is doubting. This also was part of their wicked design against Him; but they sought also in another way to control His power of speech, namely, by provoking Him to say something by which He might be condemned; whence it follows, *Laying in wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.* Having first spoken of "forcing," Luke now says to catch or seize something from His mouth; at one time indeed they asked Him concerning the Law, that they might convict as a blasphemer Him who accused Moses; but at another time concerning Cæsar, that they might accuse Him as a traitor and rebel against the majesty of Cæsar.

CHAP. 12

12:1–3

1. In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to

say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

2. For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.

Theophylact. The Pharisees sought indeed to catch Jesus in His talk, that they might lead away the people from Him. But this design of theirs is reversed. For the people came all the more unto Him gathered together by thousands, and so desirous to attach themselves to Christ, that they pressed one upon another. So mighty a thing is truth, so feeble every where deceit. Whence it is said, *And when there were gathered together a great multitude, insomuch that they trode upon one another, he began to say unto his disciples, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For they were false accusers; therefore Christ warned His disciples against them.

Gregory Nazianzen. When leaven is praised it is as composing the bread of life, but when blamed it signifies a lasting and bitter maliciousness.

Theophylact. He calls their hypocrisy leaven, as perverting and corrupting the intentions of the men in whom it has sprung up. For nothing so changes the characters of men as hypocrisy.

Bede. For as a little leaven leaveneth a whole lump of meal, (1 Cor. 5:6.) so hypocrisy will rob the mind of all the purity and integrity of its virtues.

Ambrose. Our Lord has introduced a most forcible argument for preserving simplicity, and being zealous for the faith, that we should not after the manner of faithless Jews put one thing in practice, while in words we pretend another, namely, that at the last day the hidden thoughts accusing or else excusing one another, shall be seen to reveal the secrets of our mind. Whence it is added, *There is nothing hid which shall not be revealed.*

Origen. He either then says this concerning that time when God shall judge the secrets of men, or He says it because however much a man may endeavour to hide the good deeds of another by discredit, good of its own nature cannot be concealed.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 34. in Matt.) As if He says to His disciples, Although now some call you deceivers and wizards, time shall reveal all things and convict them of calumny, while it makes known your virtue. Therefore whatsoever things I have spoken to you in the small corner of Palestine, these boldly and with open brow, casting away all fear, proclaim to the whole world. And therefore He adds, *Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in light.*

Bede. Or He says this, because all the things which the Apostles of old spoke and suffered amid the darkness of oppression and the gloom of the prison, are now that the Church is made known through the world and their acts are read, publicly proclaimed. The words, *shall be proclaimed on the housetops*, are spoken according to the manner of the country of Palestine, where they are accustomed to live on the housetops. For their roofs were not after our way raised to a point, but flat shaped, and level at the top. Therefore He says, *proclaimed on the housetops*; that is, spoken openly in the hearing of all men.

Theophylact. Or this is addressed to the Pharisees; as if He said, O Pharisees, what you have spoken in darkness, that is, all your endeavours to tempt me in the secrets of your hearts, shall be heard in the light, for I am the light, and in My light shall be known whatsoever your darkness devises. And what you have spoken in the ear and in closets, that is, whatsoever in whispers you have poured into one another's ears, shall be proclaimed on the housetops, that is, was as audible to me as if it had been cried aloud on the housetops. Herein also you may understand that the light is the Gospel, but the housetop the lofty souls of the Apostles. But whatever things the Pharisees plotted together, were afterwards divulged and heard in the light of the Gospel, the great Herald, the Holy Spirit, presiding over the souls of the Apostles.

12:4–7

4. And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?

7. But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Ambrose. Since unbelief springs from two causes, either from a deeply-seated malice or a sudden fear; lest any one from terror should be compelled to deny the God whom he acknowledges in his heart, He well adds, *And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For it is not absolutely to every one that this discourse seems to apply, but to those who love God with their whole heart to whom it belongs to say, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* (Rom. 8:3.) But they who are not such, are tottering, and ready to fall down. Moreover our Lord says, *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* (John 15:13.) How then is it not most ungrateful to Christ not to repay Him what we receive?

Ambrose. He tells us also, that that death is not terrible for which at a far more costly rate of interest immortality is to be purchased.

Cyril of Alexandria. We must then consider that crowns and honours are prepared for the labours of those upon whom men are continually venting forth their indignation, and to them the death of the body is the end of their persecutions. Whence He adds, *And after this have nothing more that they can do.*

Bede. Their rage then is but useless raving, who cast the lifeless limbs of martyrs to be torn in pieces by wild beasts and birds, seeing that they can in no wise prevent the omnipotence of God from quickening and bringing them to life again.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 22. in Matt.) Observe how our Lord makes His disciples superior to all, by exhorting them to despise that very death which is terrible to all. At the same time also he brings them proofs of the immortality of the soul: adding, *I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him,*

which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.

Ambrose. For our natural death is not the end of punishment: and therefore He concludes that death is the cessation of bodily punishment, but the punishment of the soul is everlasting. And God alone is to be feared, to whose power nature prescribes not, but is herself subject; adding, *Yea, I say unto you, Fear him.*

Theophylact. Here observe, that upon sinners death is sent as a punishment, since they are here tormented by destruction, and afterwards thrust down into hell. But if you will sift the words you will understand something farther. For He says not, "Who casts into hell," but *has power to cast*. For not every one dying in sin is forthwith thrust down into hell, but there is sometimes pardon given for the sake of the offerings and prayers which are made for the dead [a].

Ambrose. Our Lord then had instilled the virtue of simplicity, had awakened a courageous spirit. Their faith alone was wavering, and well did He strengthen it by adding with respect to things of less value, *Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God.* As if He said, If God forgets not the sparrows, how can He man?

Bede. The dipondius is a coin of the lightest weight, and equal to two asses.

Gloss. (ordin.) Now that which in number is one is in weight an ass, but that which is two is a dipondius.

Ambrose. But perhaps some one will say, How is it that the Apostle says, *Does the Lord care for oxen?* (1 Cor. 9:9.) whereas an ox is of more value than a sparrow; but to care for is one thing, to have knowledge another.

Origen. Literally, hereby is signified the quickness of the Divine foresight, which reaches even to the least things. But mystically, the five sparrows justly represent the spiritual senses, which have perception of high and heavenly things: beholding God, hearing the Divine voice, tasting of the bread of life, smelling the perfume of Christ's anointing, handling the Word of Life. And these being sold for two farthings, that is, being lightly esteemed by those who count as perishing whatever is of the Spirit, are not forgotten before God. But God is said to be forgetful of some because of their iniquities.

Theophylact. Or these five senses are sold for two farthings, that is, the New and Old Testament, and are therefore not forgotten by God. Of those whose senses are given up to the word of life that they may be fit for the spiritual food, the Lord is ever mindful.

Ambrose. Or else; A good sparrow is one which nature has furnished with the power of flying; for nature has given us the grace of flying, pleasure has taken it away, which loads with meats the soul of the wicked, and moulds it towards the nature of a fleshly mass. The five senses of the body then, if they seek the food of earthly alloy, cannot fly back to the fruits of higher actions. A bad sparrow therefore is one which has lost its habit of flying through the fault of earthly grovelling; such are those sparrows which are sold for two farthings, namely, at the price of worldly luxury. For the enemy sets up his, as it were, captive slaves, at the very lowest price. But the Lord, being the fit judge of His own work, has redeemed at a great price us, His noble servants, whom He hath made in His own image.

Cyril of Alexandria. It is His care then diligently to know the life of the saints. Whence it follows, *But the hairs of your heads are all numbered*; by which He means, that of all things which relate to them He has most accurate knowledge, for the numbering manifests the minuteness of the care exercised.

Ambrose. Lastly, the numbering of the hairs is not to be taken with reference to the act of reckoning, but to the capability of knowing. Yet they are well said to be numbered, because those things which we wish to preserve we number.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now mystically, indeed, the head of a man is his understanding, but his hairs the thoughts, which are open to the eye of God.

Theophylact. Or, by the head of each of the faithful, you must understand a conversation meet for Christ, but by his hair, the works of bodily mortification which are numbered by God, and are worthy of the Divine regard.

Ambrose. If then such is the majesty of God, that a single sparrow or the number of our hair is not beside His knowledge, how unworthy is it to suppose that the Lord is either ignorant of the hearts of the faithful, or despises them so as to account them of less value. Hence He proceeds to conclude, *Fear not then, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

Bede. We must not read, *Ye are more*, which relates to the comparison of number, but ye are of more value, that is, of greater estimation in the sight of God.

Athanasius. (pluris estis) Now I ask the Arians, if God, as if disdaining to make all other things, made only His Son, but deputed all things to His Son; how is it that He extends His providence even to such trifling things as our hair, and the sparrows? For upon whatever things He exercises His providence, of these is He the Creator by His own word.

8. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God:

9. But he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.

10. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

11. And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

12. For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

Bede. It was said above, that every hidden work and word is to be revealed, but He now declares that this revelation is to take place in the presence of the heavenly city and the eternal Judge and King; saying, *But I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me, &c.*

Ambrose. He has also well introduced faith, stimulating us to its confession, and to faith itself He has placed virtue as a foundation. For as faith is the incentive to fortitude, so is fortitude the strong support of faith.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 34. in Matt.) The Lord is not then content with an inward faith, but requires an outward confession, urging us to confidence and greater love. And since this is useful for all, He speaks generally, saying, *Whosoever shall confess me, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Now Paul says, *If thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* (Rom. 10:9.) The whole mystery of Christ is conveyed in these words. For we must first confess that the Word born of God the Father, that is, the only-begotten Son of His substance, is Lord of all, not as one who had gained His Lordship from without and by stealth, but who is in truth by His nature Lord, as well as the Father. Next we must confess that God raised Him from the dead, who was Himself truly made man, and suffered in the flesh for us; for such He rose from the dead. Whoever then will so confess Christ before men, namely, as God and the Lord, Christ will confess him before the angels of God at that time when He shall descend with the holy angels in the glory of His Father at the end of the world.

Eusebius. But what will be more glorious than to have the only-begotten Word of God Himself to bear witness in our behalf at the divine judgment, and by His own love to draw forth as a recompense for confession, a declaration upon that soul to whom He bears witness, For not as abiding without him to whom He bears witness, but as dwelling in him and filling him with light, He will give His testimony. But having confirmed them with good hope by so great promises, He again rouses them by more alarming threats, saying, *But he that denieth me before men, shall be denied before the Angels of God.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Both in condemnation a greater punishment is announced, and in blessing a greater reward; as if He said, Now you confess and deny, but I then, for a far greater recompense of good and evil awaits them in the world to come.

Eusebius. He rightly declares this threatening, in order that none should refuse to confess Him by reason of the punishment, which is to be denied by the Son of God, to be disowned by Wisdom, to fall away from life, to be deprived of light, and to lose every blessing; but all these things to suffer before God the Father who is in heaven, and the Angels of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now they who deny are first indeed those who in time of persecution renounce the faith. Besides these, there are heretical teachers also, and their disciples.

Chrysostom. There are other modes also of denying which St. Paul describes, saying, *They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him.* (Tit. 1:16.) And again, *If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.* (1 Tim. 5:8.) Also, *Flee from covetousness, which is idolatry.* (Col. 3:5.) Since then there are so many modes of denial, it is plain that there are many likewise of confession, which whosoever has practised, shall hear that most blessed voice with which Christ greets all who have confessed Him. But mark the precaution of the words. For in the Greek he says, *Whosoever shall confess* in Me, shewing that not by his own strength, but by the aid of grace from above, a man confesses Christ. But of him who denies, He said not "in Me," but *me*. For though being destitute of grace he denies, he is nevertheless condemned, because the destitution is owing to him who is forsaken, or he is forsaken for his own fault.

Bede. But lest from what He says, that those who have denied Him are to be denied, it should be supposed that the condition of all was alike, that is, both of those who deny deliberately, and those who deny from infirmity or ignorance, He immediately added, *And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him.*

Cyril of Alexandria. But if our Saviour means to imply, that if any injurious word is spoken by us against a common man, we shall obtain pardon if we repent, there is no difficulty in the passage, for since God is by nature merciful, He restores those who are willing to repent. But if the words are referred to Christ how is he not to be condemned who speaks a word against Him?

Ambrose. Truly by the Son of Man we understand Christ, Who by the Holy Spirit was born of a virgin, seeing that His only parent on earth is the Virgin. What then, is the Holy Spirit greater than Christ, that they who sin against Christ should obtain pardon, while they who offend against the Holy Spirit are not thought worthy to obtain it? But where there is unity of power there is no question of comparison.

Athanasius. (Ep. 4. ad Serap.) The ancients indeed, the learned Origen and the great Theognostus, describe this to be the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, when they who have been counted worthy of the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, fall back into sin. For they say that for this reason they can not obtain pardon; as Paul says, *It is impossible for those who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost to renew them again, &c.* (Heb. 6:4.)

But each adds his own explanation. For Origen gives this as his reason; God the Father indeed penetrates and contains all things, but the power of the Son extends to rational things only; the Holy Spirit is only in those who partake of Him in the gift of Baptism. When then catechumens and heathens sin, they sin against the Son who abideth in them, yet they may obtain pardon when they become worthy of the gift of regeneration. But when the baptized commit sin, he says that their offence touches the Spirit, after coming to whom they have sinned, and therefore their condemnation must be irrevocable.

But Theognostus says, that he who has gone beyond both the first and second threshold deserves less punishment, but he who has also passed the third, shall no more receive pardon. By the first and second threshold, he speaks of the doctrine of the Father and the Son, but by the third the partaking of the Holy Spirit. According to St. John, *When the Spirit of truth is come, he will lead you into all truth.* (John 16:13.) Not as though the doctrine of the Spirit was above that of the Son, but because the Son condescends to those who are imperfect, but the Spirit is the seal of those who are perfect. If then not because the Spirit is above the Son, blasphemy against the Spirit is unpardonable; but because remission of sin is indeed to the imperfect, but no excuse remains to the perfect, therefore since the Son is in the Father, He is in those in whom the Father and the Spirit are not absent, for the Holy Trinity cannot be divided. Besides this, if all things were made by the Son, and all things consist in Him, He will Himself be truly in all; so that it must needs be, that he who sinneth against the Son, sinneth against the Father also, and against the Holy Spirit. But holy Baptism is given in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And so they that sin after baptism commit blasphemy against the holy Trinity. But if the Pharisees had not received baptism, how did He condemn them as if they had spoken blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, of which they were not yet partakers, especially since He did not accuse them simply of sin, but of blasphemy? But these differ, for he who sins transgresses the Law, but he who blasphemes offends against the Deity Himself. But again, if to those who sin after baptism there is no remission of the punishment of their offences, how does the Apostle pardon the penitent at Corinth; (2 Cor. 11:10) but he travails in birth of the backsliding Galatians until Christ be formed again in them. (Gal. 4:19.)

And why also do we oppose Novatus, who does away with repentance after baptism? The Apostle to the Hebrews does not thus reject the repentance of sinners, but lest they should suppose that as according to the rites of the Law, under the veil of repentance there could be many and daily baptisms, he therefore warns them indeed to repent, but tells them that there could be only one renewal, namely, by Baptism. But with such considerations I return to the dispensation (οἰκονομίαν) which is in Christ, who being God was made man; as very God raised the dead; as clothed with the flesh, thirsted, laboured, suffered. When any then, looking to human things, see the Lord athirst or in suffering, and speak against the Saviour as if against a man, they sin indeed, yet may speedily on repentance receive pardon, alleging as excuse the weakness of His body. And again when any, beholding the works of Deity, doubt concerning the nature of our Lord's body, they also sin grievously. But these too if they repent may be quickly pardoned, seeing that they have an excuse in the greatness of the works. But when they refer the works of God to the Devil, justly do they undergo the irrevocable sentence, because they have judged God to be the Devil, and the true God to have nothing more in His works than the evil spirits. To this unbelief then the Pharisees had come. For when the Saviour manifested the works of the Father, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, and such like deeds, they said that these were the works of Beelzebub. As well might they say, looking at the order of the world and the providence exercised over it, that the world was created by Beelzebub. As long then as regarding human things they erred in knowledge, saying, *Is not this the carpenter's son, and how knoweth this man things which he never learnt?* He suffered them as sinning against the Son of man; but when they wax more furious, saying that the works of God are the works of Beelzebub, He no longer endured them. For thus also He endured their fathers so long as their murmurings were for bread and water; but when having found a calf, they impute to it the divine mercies they had received, they were punished. At first indeed multitudes of them were slain, afterwards He said indeed, *Nevertheless, in the day when I visit I will visit their sin upon them.* (Exod. 32:34.) Such then is the sentence passed upon the Pharisees, that in the flame prepared for the devil they shall be together with him everlastingly consumed. Not then to make comparison between a blasphemy spoken against Himself and the Holy Spirit said He these things, as if the Spirit were the greater, but each blasphemy being uttered against Him, He shews the one to be greater, the other less. For looking at Him as man they reviled Him, and said that His works were those of Beelzebub.

Ambrose. Thus it is thought by some that we should believe both the Son and the Holy Spirit to be the same Christ, preserving the distinction of Persons with the unity of the substance, since Christ both God and man is one Spirit, as it is written, *The Spirit before our face, Christ the Lord*; (Lam. 4:20.) the same Spirit is holy, for both the Father is holy, and the Son holy, and the Spirit holy. If then Christ is each, what difference is there except we know that it is not lawful for us to deny the divinay of Christ?

Bede. Or else; Whoso saith that the works of the Holy Spirit are those of Beelzebub, it shall not be forgiven him either in the present world, or in that which is to come. Not that we deny that if he could come to repentance he could be forgiven by God, but that we believe that such a blasphemer as by the necessity of his deserts he would never come to forgiveness, so neither to the fruits themselves of a worthy repentance; according to that, *He hath blinded their eyes, so that they should not be converted, and I should heal them.* (Isa. 6:10.)

Cyril of Alexandria. But if the Holy Spirit were a creature, and not of the divine substance of the Father and the Son, how does an injury committed against Him entail upon it so great a punishment as is denounced against those that blaspheme against God?

Bede. Nor however are all they who say that the Spirit is not holy, or is not God, but is inferior to the Father and the Son, involved in the crime of unpardonable blasphemy, because they are led to do it through human ignorance, not a demoniacal hatred, as the rulers of the Jews were.

Augustine. (Serm. 71.) Or if it were here said, "Who hath spoken any blasphemy whatever against the Holy Spirit," we ought then to understand thereby "all blasphemy;" but because it was said, *who blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit*, let it be understood of him that blasphemed not in any way, but in such a manner that it can never be pardoned him. For so when it was said, *The Lord tempteth no man*, (James 1:13.) that is not spoken of every, but only of a certain kind of temptation. Now what that kind of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is, let us sec. The first blessing of believers is forgiveness of sins in the Holy Spirit. Against this free gift the impenitent heart speaks. Impenitence itself therefore is blasphemy against the Spirit, which is neither forgiven in this world, nor in that which is to come; for repentance gains that forgiveness in this world which is to avail in the world to come.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the Lord after having inspired such great fear, and prepared men to resist those who depart from a right confession, commanded them for the rest to take no care what they should answer, because for those who are faithfully disposed, the Holy Spirit frames fit words, as their teacher, and dwelling within them. Whence it follows, *And when they shall bring you into synagogues, take no thought how or what ye shall answer.*

Gloss. (inter.) Now he says, *how*, with respect to the manner of speaking, *what*, with respect to the manner of intention. How ye shall answer to those who ask, or what ye shall say to those who wish to learn.

Bede. For when we are led for Christ's sake before judges, we ought to offer only our will for Christ, but in answering, the Holy Spirit will supply His grace, as it is added, *For the Holy Spirit will leach you, &c.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 33. in Matt.) But elsewhere it is said, *Be ready to answer every one who shall ask you for a reason of the hope that is in you.* When indeed a contest or strife arises among friends, He bids us take thought, but when there are the terrors of a court of justice and fear on every side, He gives His own strength so as to inspire boldness and utterance, but not dismay.

Theophylact. Since then our weakness is twofold, and either from fear of punishment we shun martyrdom, or because we are ignorant and can not give a

reason of our faith, he has excluded both; the fear of punishment in that He said, *Fear not them which kill the body*, but the fear of ignorance, when He said, *Take no thought how or what ye shall answer, &c.*

12:13–15

13. And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15. And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Ambrose. The whole of the former passage is given to prepare us for undergoing suffering for confessing the Lord, or for contempt of death, or for the hope of reward, or for denunciation of the punishment that will await him to whom pardon will never be granted. And since covetousness is generally wont to try virtue, for destroying this also, a precept and example is added, as it is said, *And one of the company said to him, Speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.*

Theophylact. As these two brothers were contending concerning the division of their paternal inheritance, it follows, that one meant to defraud the other; but our Lord teaches us that we ought not to be set on earthly things, and rebukes him that called Him to the division of inheritance; as it follows, *And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?*

Bede. He who wills to impose the trouble of division of lands upon the Master who is commending the joys of heavenly peace, is rightly called man, according to that, *whereas there is envying, strife, and divisions among you, are ye not men?* (1 Cor. 3:3.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Now the Son of God, when He was made like unto us, was appointed by God the Father to be King and Prince upon his holy Mount of Sion, to make known the Divine command.

Ambrose. Well then does He avoid earthly things who had descended for the sake of divine things, and deigns not to be a judge of strifes and arbiter of laws, having the judgment of the quick and dead and the recompensing of works. You should consider then, not what you seek, but from whom you ask it; and you should not eagerly suppose that the greater are to be disturbed by the less. Therefore is this brother deservedly disappointed who desired to occupy the steward of heavenly things with corruptible, seeing that between brothers no judge should intervene, but natural affection should be the umpire to divide the patrimony, although immortality not riches should be the patrimony which men should wait for.

Bede. He takes occasion from this foolish petitioner to fortify both the multitudes and His disciples alike by precept and example against the plague of covetousness. Whence it follows, *He said to them, Take heed, and beware of all covetousness;* and he says, *of all*, because some things seem to be honestly done, but the internal judge decides with what intention they are done.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or he says, *of all covetousness*, that is, great and little. For covetousness is unprofitable, as the Lord says, *Ye shall build houses of hewn stone, and shall not dwell in them.* (Amos 5:11, Isa. 5:10.) And elsewhere, *Yea ten acres of vineyards shall yield one bath, and the seed of an homer shall yield an ephah.* But also in another way it is unprofitable, as he shews, adding, *For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance*, &c.

Theophylact. This our Lord says to rebuke the motives of the covetous, who seem to heap up riches as if they were going to live for a long time. But will wealth ever make thee long lived? Why then dost thou manifestly undergo evils for the sake of an uncertain rest? For it is doubtful whether thou oughtest to attain to an old age, for the sake of which thou art collecting treasures.

12:16–21

16. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18. And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21. So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Theophylact. Having said that the life of man is not extended by abundance of wealth, he adds a parable to induce belief in this, as it follows, *And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully.*

Basil. (in Hom. de Avar.) Not indeed about to reap any good from his plenty of fruits, but that the mercy of God might the more appear, which extends its goodness even to the bad; sending down His rain upon the just and the unjust. But what are the things wherewith this man repays his Benefactor? He remembered not his fellow-creatures, nor deemed that he ought to give of his superfluities to the needy. His barns indeed bursting from the abundance of his stores, yet was his greedy mind by no means satisfied. He was unwilling to put up with his old ones because of his covetousness, and not able to undertake new ones because of the number, for his counsels were imperfect, and his care barren. Hence it follows, *And he thought.* His complaint is like that of the poor. Does not the man oppressed with want say, What shall I do, whence can I get food, whence clothing? Such things also the rich man utters. For his mind is distressed on account of his fruits pouring out from his storehouse, lest perchance when they have come forth they should profit the poor; like the glutton who had rather burst from eating, than give any thing of what remains to the starving.

Gregory. (Mor. 15. c. 13.) O adversity, the child of plenty. For saying, *What shall I do*, he surely betokens, that, oppressed by the success of his wishes, he labours as it were under a load of goods.

Basil. (ubi sup.) It was easy for him to say, I will open my barn, I will call together the needy, but he has no thought of want, only of amassing; for it

follows, *And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns.* Thou doest well, for the storehouses of iniquity are worthy of destruction. Pull down thy barns, from which no one receives comfort. He adds, *I will build greater.* But thou shalt complete these, wilt thou again destroy them? What more foolish than labouring on for ever. Thy barns, if thou wilt, are the home of the poor. But thou wilt say, *Whom do I wrong by keeping what is my own?* For it follows also, *And there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.* Tell me what is thine, from whence didst thou get it and bring it into life? As he who anticipates the public games, injures those who are coming by appropriating to himself what is appointed for the common use, so likewise the rich who regard as their own the common things which they have forestalled. For if every one receiving what is sufficient for his own necessity would leave what remains to the needy, there would be no rich or poor.

Cyril of Alexandria. Observe also in another respect the folly of his words, when he says, *I will gather all my fruits*, as if he thought that he had not obtained them from God, but that they were the fruits of his own labours.

Basil. (ubi sup.) But if thou confessest that those things have come to thee from God, is God then unjust in distributing to us unequally. Why dost thou abound while another begs? unless that thou shouldest gain the rewards of a good stewardship, and be honoured with the meed of patience. Art not thou then a robber, for counting as thine own what thou hast received to distribute? It is the bread of the famished which thou receivest, the garment of the naked which rots in thy possession, the money of the pennyless which thou hast buried in the earth. Wherefore then dost thou injure so many to whom thou mightest be a benefactor.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 8. in 2 ad Tim.) But in this he errs, that he thinks those things good which are indifferent. For there are some things good, some evil, some between the two. The good are chastity, and humility, and the like, which when a man chooses he becomes good. But opposed to these are the evil, which when a man chooses he becomes bad; and there are the neutral, as riches, which at one time indeed are directed to good, as to almsgiving, at other times to evil, as to covetousness. And in like manner poverty at one time leads to blasphemy, at another to wisdom, according to the disposition of the user.

Cyril of Alexandria. The rich man then builds barns which last not, but decay, and what is still more foolish, reckons for himself upon a long life; for it follows, *And I will say unto my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years.* But, O rich man, thou hast indeed fruits in thy barns, but as for many years whence canst thou obtain them?

Athanasius. (non occ.) Now if any one lives so as to die daily, seeing that our life is naturally uncertain, he will not sin, for the greater fear destroys very much pleasure, but the rich man on the contrary, promising to himself length of life, secks after pleasures, for he says, *Rest*, that is, from toil, *eat, drink, and be merry*, that is, with great luxury.

Basil. (ubi sup.) Thou art so careless with respect to the goods of the soul, that thou ascribest the meats of the body to the soul. If indeed it has virtue, if it is fruitful in good works, if it clings to God, it possesses many goods, and rejoices with a worthy joy. But because thou art altogether carnal and subject to the passions, thou speakest from thy belly, not from thy soul.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 39, 8. in 1 ad Cor.) Now it behoves us not to indulge in delights which fattening the body make lean the soul, and bring a heavy burden upon it, and spread darkness over it, and a thick covering, because in pleasure our governing part which is the soul becomes the slave, but the subject part, namely the body, rules. But the body is in need not of luxuries but of food, that it may be nourished, not that it may be racked and melt away. For not to the soul alone are pleasures hurtful, but to the body itself, because from being a strong body it becomes weak, from being healthy diseased, from being active slothful, from being beautiful unshapely, and from youthful old.

Basil. (Hom. in loc.) But he was permitted to deliberate in every thing, and to manifest his purpose, that he might receive a sentence such as his inclinations deserved. But while he speaks in secret, his words are weighed in heaven, from whence the answers come to him. For it follows, *But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall they require of thee.* Hear the name of folly, which most properly belongs to thee which not man has imposed, but God Himself.

Gregory. (22. Mor. c. 2.) The same night he was taken away, who had expected many years, that he indeed who had in gathering stores for himself looked a long time forward, should not see even the next day.

Chrysostom. (Concio. 2. de Lazar.) *They shall require of thee*, for perhaps certain dread powers were sent to require it, since if when going from city to city we want a guide, much more will the soul when released from the body, and passing to a future life, need direction. On this account many times the soul rises and sinks into the deep again, when it ought to depart from the body. For the consciousness of our sins is ever pricking us, but most of all when we are going to be dragged before the awful tribunal. For when the whole accumulation of crimes is brought up again, and placed before the eyes, it astounds the mind. And as prisoners are always indeed sorrowful, but particularly at the time when they are going to be brought before the judge; so also the soul at this time is greatly tormented by sin and afflicted, but much more after it has been removed.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But in the night the soul was taken away which had gone forth in the darkness of its heart, being unwilling to have the light of consideration, so as to foresee what it might suffer. But He adds, *Then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 23. in Gen.) For here shalt thou leave those things, and not only reap no advantage from them, but carry a load of sins upon thy own shoulders. And these things which thou hast laid up will for the most part come into the hands of enemies, but of thee shall an account of them be required. It follows, *So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

Bede. For such a one is a fool, and will be taken off in the night. He then who wishes to be rich toward God, will not lay up treasures for himself, but distribute his possessions to the poor.

Ambrose. For in vain he amasses wealth who knows not how to use it. Neither are these things ours which we cannot take away with us. Virtue alone is the companion of the dead, mercy alone follows us, which gains for the dead an everlasting habitation.

12:22–23

22. And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat: neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

Theophylact. The Lord carries us onward by degrees to a more perfect teaching. For He taught us above to beware of covetousness, and He added the parable of the rich man, intimating thereby that the fool is he who desires more than is enough. Then as His discourse goes on, He forbids us to be anxious even about necessary things, plucking out the very root of covetousness; whence he says, *Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought.* As if He said, Since he is a fool, who awards to himself a longer measure of life, and is thereby rendered more covetous; be not ye careful for your soul, what ye shall eat, not that the intellectual soul eats, but because there seems no other way for the soul to dwell united to the body except by being nourished. Or because it is a part of the animate body to receive nourishment, he fitly ascribes nourishment to the soul. For the soul is called also a nutritive power, as it is so understood. Be not then anxious for the nourishing part of the soul, what ye shall eat. But a dead body may also be clothed, therefore he adds, *Nor for your body, what ye shall put on.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 21. in Matt.) Now the words, *Take no thought*, are not the same as do no work, but, "Have not your minds fixed on earthly things." For it so happens, that the man who is working takes no thought.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now the soul is more excellent than food, and the body than clothing. Therefore He adds, *The life is more than meat, &c.* As if He said, "God who has implanted that which is greater, how will He not give that which is less?" Let not our attention then be stayed upon trifling things, nor our understanding serve to seek for food and raiment, but rather think on whatever saves the soul, and raises it to the kingdom of heaven.

Ambrose. Now nothing is more likely to produce conviction in believers that God can give us all things, than the fact, that the ethereal spirit perpetuates the vital union of the soul and body in close fellowship, without our exertion, and the healthgiving use of food does not fail until the last day of death has arrived. Since then the soul is clothed with the body as with a garment, and the body is kept alive by the vigour of the soul, it is absurd to suppose that a supply of food will be wanting to us, who are in possession of the everlasting substance of life.

12:24–26

24. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

25. And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

26. If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

Cyril of Alexandria. As before in raising our minds to spiritual boldness, He assured us by the example of the birds, which are counted of little worth, saying, *Ye are of more value than many sparrows;* so now also from the instance of birds, He conveys to us a firm and undoubting trust, saying, *Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which neither have storehouse nor barn, and God feedeth them; how much more are ye better than fowls?*

Bede. That is, ye are more precious, because a rational animal like man is of a higher order in the nature of things than irrational things, as the birds are.

Ambrose.: But it is a great thing to follow up this example in faith. For to the birds of the air who have no labour of tilling, no produce from the fruitfulness of crops, Divine Providence grants an unfailing sustenance. It is true then that the cause of our poverty seems to be covetousness. For they have for this reason a toilless and abundant use of food, because they think not of claiming to themselves by any special right fruits given for common food. We have lost what things were common by claiming them as our own. For neither is any thing a man's own, where nothing is perpetual, nor is supply certain when the end is uncertain.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now whereas our Lord might have taken an example from the men who have cared least about earthly things, such as Elias, Moses, and John, and the like, He made mention of the birds, following the Old Testament, which sends us to the bee and the ant, and others of the same kind, in whom the Creator has implanted certain natural dispositions.

Theophylact. Now the reason that he omits mention of the other birds, and speaks only of the ravens, is, that the young of the ravens are by an especial providence fed by God. For the ravens produce indeed, but do not feed, but neglect their young, to whom in a marvellous manner from the air their food comes, brought as it were by the wind, which they receive having their mouths open, and so are nourished. Perhaps also such things were spoken by synecdoche, i. e. the whole signified by a part. Hence in Matthew our Lord refers to the birds of the air, (Matt. 6:26.) but here more particularly to the ravens, as being more greedy and ravenous than others.

Eusebius. By the ravens also he signifies something else, for the birds which pick up seeds have a ready source of food, but those that feed on flesh as the ravens do have more difficulty in getting it. Yet birds of this kind suffer from no lack of food, because the providence of God extends every where; but he brings to the same purpose also a third argument, saying, *And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature?*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 21. in Matt.) Observe, that when God has once given a soul, it abides the same, but the body is taking growth daily. Passing over then the soul as not receiving increase, he makes mention only of the body, giving us to understand that it is not increased by food alone, but by the Divine Providence, from the fact that no one by receiving nourishment can add any thing to his stature. It is therefore concluded, *If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, take no thought for the rest.*

Eusebius. If no one has by his own skill contrived a bodily stature for himself, but can not add even the shortest delay to the prefixed limit of his time of life, why should we be vainly anxious about the necessaries of life?

Bede. To Him then leave the care of directing the body, by whose aid you see it to come to pass that you have a body of such a stature.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. qu. 28.) But in speaking concerning increasing the stature of the body, He refers to that which is least, that is, to God, to make bodies.

12:27–31

27. Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29. And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 22. in Matt.) As our Lord had before given instruction about food, so now also about raiment, saying, *Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin*, that is, to make themselves clothing. Now as above when our Lord said, *the birds sow not*, He did not reprove sowing, but all superfluous trouble; so when He said, *They toil not, neither do they spin*, He does not put an end to work, but to all anxiety about it.

Eusebius. But if a man wishes to be adorned with precious raiment, let him observe closely how even down to the flowers which spring from the earth God extends His manifold wisdom, adorning them with divers colours, so adapting to the delicate membranes of the flowers dyes far superior to gold and purple, that under no luxurious king, not even Solomon himself, who was renowned among the ancients for his riches as for his wisdom and pleasures, has so exquisite a work been devised; and hence it follows, *But I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 22. in Matt.) He does not here employ the example of the birds, making mention of a swan or a peacock, but the lilies, for he wishes to give force to the argument on both sides, that is to say, both from the meanness of the things which have obtained such honour, and from the excellence of the honour conferred upon them; and hence a little after He does not call them lilies, but *grass*, as it is added, *If then God so clothe the grass, which to-day is*, He says not, which to-morrow is not, but *to-morrow is cast into the oven*; nor does He say simply, God clothe, but He says, *God so clothe*, which has much meaning, and adds, *how much more you*, which expresses His estimation and care of the human race. Lastly, when it behoves Him to find fault, He deals here also with mildness, reproving them not for unbelief, but for littleness of faith, adding, *O ye of little faith*, that He may so the more rouse us up to believe in His words, that we should not only take no thought about our apparel, but not even admire elegance in dress.

Cyril of Alexandria. For it is sufficient to the prudent for the sake of necessity only, to have a suitable garment, and moderate food, not exceeding what is enough. To the saints it is sufficient even to have those spiritual delights which are in Christ, and the glory that comes after.

Ambrose. Nor does it seem of light moment, that a flower is either compared to man, or even almost more than to man is preferred to Solomon, to make us conceive the glory expressed, from the brightness of the colour to be that of the heavenly angels; who are truly the flowers of the other world, since by their brightness the world is adorned, and they breathe forth the pure odour of sanctification, who shackled by no cares, employed in no toilsome task, cherish the grace of the Divine bounty towards them, and the gifts of their heavenly nature. Therefore well also is Solomon hero described to be clothed in his own glory, and in another place to he veiled, because the frailty of his bodily nature be clothed as it were by the powers of his mind to the glory of his works. But the Angels, whose diviner nature remains free from bodily injury, are rightly preferred, although he be the greatest man. We should not however despair of God's mercy to us, to whom by the grace of His resurrection He promises the likeness of angels.

Cyril of Alexandria. it were strange for the disciples, who ought to set before others the rule and pattern of life, to fall into those things, which it was their duty to advise men to renounce; and therefore our Lord adds, *And seek not what, ye shall eat, &c.* Herein also our Lord strongly recommends the study of holy preaching, bidding His disciples to cast away all human cares.

Bede. It must however be observed, that He says not, Do not seek or take thought about meat, or drink, or raiment, but *what* ye shall eat or drink, in which He seems to me to reprove those who, despising the common food and clothing, seek for themselves either more delicate or coarser food and clothing than theirs with whom they live.

Gregory of Nyssa. (in Orat. Dom. Serm. 1.) Some have obtained dominion and honours and riches by praying for them, how then dost thou forbid us to seek such things in prayer? And indeed that all these things belong to the Divine counsel is plain to every one, yet are they conferred by God upon those that seek them, in order that by learning that God listens to our lower petitions, we may be raised to the desire of higher things; just as we see in children, who as soon as they are born cling to their mother's breasts, but when the child grows up it despises the milk, and seeks after a necklace or some such thing with which the eye is delighted; and again when the mind has advanced together with the body, giving up all childish desires, he seeks from his parents those things which are adapted to a perfect life.

Augustine. (de Qu Ev. l. ii. qu. 29.) Now having forbidden all thought about food, he next goes on to warn men not to be puffed up, saying, *Neither be ye lifted up*, (nolite in sublime tolli μὴ μετεωρίζισθε.) for man first seeks these things to satisfy his wants, but when he is filled, he begins to be puffed up concerning them. This is just as if a wounded man should boast that he had many plasters in his house, whereas it were well for him that he had no wounds, and needed not even one plaster.

Theophylact. Or by being lifted up he means nothing else but an unsteady motion of the mind, meditating first one thing, then another, and jumping from this to that, and imagining lofty things.

Basil. And that you may understand an elation of this kind, remember the vanity of your own youth; if at any time while by yourself you have thought about life and promotions, passing rapidly from one dignity to another, have grasped riches, have built palaces, benefitted friends, been revenged upon enemies. Now such abstraction is sin, for to have our delights fixed upon useless things, leads away from the truth. Hence He goes on to add, *For all these things do the nations of the world seek after, &c.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) For to be careful about visible things is the part of those who possess no hope of a future life, no fear of judgment to come.

Basil. But with respect to the necessaries of life, He adds, *And your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 22. in Matt.) He said not "God," but *your Father*, to incite them to greater confidence. For who is a father, and would not allow the want of his children to be supplied? But He adds another thing also; for you could not say that He is indeed a father, yet knoweth not that we are in need of these things. For He who has created our nature, knoweth its wants.

Ambrose. But He goes on to shew, that neither at the present time, nor hereafter, will grace be lacking to the faithful, if only they who desire heavenly things seek not earthly; for it is unworthy for men to care for meats, who fight for a kingdom. The king knoweth wherewithal he shall support and clothe his own family. Therefore it follows, *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Now Christ promises not only a kingdom, but also riches with it; for if we rescue from cares those who neglecting their own concerns are diligent about ours, much more will God.

Bede. For He declares that there is one thing which is primarily given, another which is superadded; that we ought to make eternity our aim, the present life our business.

12:32–34

32. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

33. Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

34. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Gloss. (non occ.) Our Lord having removed the care of temporal things from the hearts of His disciples, now banishes fear from them, from which superfluous cares proceed, saying, *Fear not, &c.*

Theophylact. By the little flock, our Lord signifies those who are willing to become His disciples, or because in this world the Saints seem little because of their voluntary poverty, or because they are outnumbered by the multitude of Angels, who incomparably exceed all that we can boast of. The name *little* our Lord gives to the company of the elect, either from comparison with the greater number of the reprobate, or rather because of their devout humility.

Cyril of Alexandria. But why they ought not to fear, He shews, adding, *for it is your Father's good pleasure*; as if He says, How shall He who gives such precious things be wearied in shewing mercy towards you? For although His flock is little both in nature and number and renown, yet the goodness of the Father has granted even to this little flock the lot of heavenly spirits, that is, the kingdom of heaven. Therefore that you may possess the kingdom of heaven, despise this world's wealth. Hence it is added, *Sell that ye have, &c.*

Bede. As if He says, Fear not lest they who warfare for the kingdom of God, should be in want of the necessaries of this life. But sell that ye have for alms' sake, which then is done worthily, when a man having once for his Lord's sake forsaken all that he hath, nevertheless afterwards labours with his hands that he may be able both to gain his living, and give alms.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 25. in Act.) For there is no sin which almsgiving does not avail to blot out. It is a salve adapted to ever wound. But almsgiving has to do not only with money, but with all matters also wherein man succours man, as when the physician heals, and the wise man gives counsel.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 14.) Now I fear lest you should think deeds of mercy to be not necessary to you, but voluntary. I also thought so, but was alarmed at the goats placed on the left hand, not because they robbed, but did not minister unto Christ among the poor.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) For without alms it is impossible to see the kingdom. For as a fountain if it keeps its waters within itself grows foul, so also rich men when they retain every thing in their possession.

Basil. (reg. brev. ad int. 92.) But some one will ask, upon what grounds ought we to sell that which we have? Is it that these things are by nature hurtful, or because of the temptation to our souls? To this we must answer, first, that every thing existing in the world if it were in itself evil, would be no creation of God, for *every creation of God is good.* (1 Tim. 4:4.) And next, that our Lord's command teaches us not to cast away as evil what we possess, but to distribute, saying, *and give alms.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Now perhaps this command is irksome to the rich, yet to those who are of a sound mind, it is not unprofitable, for their treasure is the kingdom of heaven. Hence it follows, *Provide for yourselves bags which wax not old, &c.*

Bede. That is, by doing alms, the reward of which abideth for ever; which must not be taken as a command that no money be kept by the saints either for their own, or the use of the poor, since we read that our Lord Himself, to whom the angels ministered, (Matt. 4:11) had a bag in which he kept the offerings of the faithful; (John 12:6.) but that God should not be obeyed for the sake of such things, and righteousness be not forsaken from fear of poverty.

Gregory of Nyssa. But He bids us lay up our visible and earthly treasures where the power of corruption does not reach, and hence He adds, *a treasure that faileth not, &c.*

Theophylact. As if He said, "Here the moth corrupts, but there is no corruption in heaven." Then because there are some things which the moth does not corrupt, He goes on to speak of the thief. For gold the moth corrupts not, but the thief takes away.

Bede. Whether then should it be simply understood, that money kept faileth, but given away to our neighbour bears everlasting fruit in heaven; or, that the treasure of good works, if it be stored up for the sake of earthly advantage, is soon corrupted and perishes; but if it be laid up solely from heavenly motives, neither outwardly by the favour of men, as by the thief which steals from without, nor inwardly by vainglory, as by the moth which devours within, can it be defiled.

Gloss. Or, the thieves are heretics and evil spirits, who are bent upon depriving us of spiritual things. The moth which secretly frets the garments is envy, which mars good desires, and bursts the bonds of charity.

Theophylact. Moreover, because all things are not taken away by theft, He adds a more excellent reason, and one which admits of no objection whatever, saying, *For where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also;* as if He says, "Suppose that neither moth corrupts nor thief takes away, yet this very thing, namely, to have the heart fixed in a buried treasure, and to sink to the earth a divine work, that is, the soul, how great a punishment it deserves."

Eusebius. For every man naturally dwells upon that which is the object of his desire, and thither he directs all his thoughts, where he supposes his whole interest to rest. If any one then has his whole mind and affections, which he calls the heart, set on things of this present life, he lives in earthly things. But if he has given his mind to heavenly things, there will his mind be; so that he seems with his body only to live with men, but with his mind to have already reached the heavenly mansion.

Bede. Now this must not only be felt concerning love of money, but all the passions. Luxurious feasts are treasures; also the sports of the gay and the desires of the lover,

12:35–40

35. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

36. And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38. And if he shall come in the second watch, or in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.

39. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Theophylact. Our Lord having taught His disciples moderation, taking from them all care and conceit of this life, now leads them on to serve and obey, saying, *Let your loins be girded*, that is, always ready to do the work of your Lord, *and your lamps burning*, that is, do not lead a life in darkness, but have with you the light of reason, shewing you what to do and what to avoid. For this world is the night, but they have their loins girded, who follow a practical or active life. For such is the condition of servants who must have with them also lamps burning; that is, the gift of discernment, that the active man may be able to distinguish not only what he ought to do, but in what way; otherwise men rush down the precipice of pride. But we must observe, that He first orders *our loins to be girded*, secondly, *our lamps to be burning*. For first indeed comes action, then reflection, which is an enlightening of the mind. Let us then strive to exercise the virtues, that we may have two lamps burning, that is, the conception of the mind ever shining forth in the soul, by which we are ourselves enlightened, and learning, whereby we enlighten others.

Maximus. Or, he teaches us to keep our lamps burning, by prayer and contemplation and spiritual love.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or, to be girded, signifies activity and readiness to undergo evils from regard to Divine love. But the burning of the lamp signifies that we should not suffer any to live in the darkness of ignorance.

Gregory. (Hom. 13. in Evang.) Or else, we gird our loins when by continence we control the lusts of the flesh. For the lust of men is in their loins, and of women in their womb; by the name of loins, therefore, from the principal sex, lust is signified. But because it is a small thing not to do evil, unless also men strive to labour in good works, it is added, *And your lamps burning in your hands*; for we hold burning lamps in our hands, when by good works we shew forth bright examples to our neighbours.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. lib. ii. q. 25.) Or, He teaches us also to gird our loins for the sake of keeping ourselves from the love of the things of this world, and to have our lamps burning, that this thing may be done with a true end and right intention.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But if a man has both of these, whosoever he be, nothing remains for him but that he should place his whole expectation on the coming of the Redeemer. Therefore it is added, *And be ye like to men that wait for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding, &c.* For our Lord went to the wedding, when ascending up into heaven as the Bridegroom He joined to Himself the heavenly multitude of angels.

Theophylact. Daily also in the heavens He betroths the souls of the Saints, whom Paul or another offers to Him, as a chaste virgin. (2 Cor 11:2.) But He returns from the celebration of the heavenly marriage, perhaps to all at the end of the whole world, when He shall come from heaven in the glory of the Father; perhaps also every hour standing suddenly present at the death of each individual.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now consider that He comes from the wedding as from a festival, which God is ever keeping; for nothing can cause sadness to the Incorruptible Nature.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Hom. 11. in Cant.) Or else, when the wedding was celebrated and the Church received into the secret bridal chamber, the angels were expecting the return of the King to His own natural blessedness. And after their example we order our life, that as they living together without evil, are prepared to welcome their Lord's return, so we also, keeping watch at the door, should make ourselves ready to obey Him when He comes knocking; for it follows, *that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately.*

Gregory. (ubi sup.) For He comes when He hastens to judgment, but He knocks, when already by the pain of sickness He denotes that death is at hand; to whom we immediately open if we receive Him with love. For he who trembles to depart from the body, has no wish to open to the Judge knocking, and dreads to see that Judge whom he remembers to have despised. But he who rests secure concerning his hope and works, immediately opens to Him that knocks; for when he is aware of the time of death drawing near, he grows joyful, because of the glory of his reward; and hence it is added, *Blessed are the servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.* He watches who keeps the eyes of his mind open to behold the true light; who by his works maintains that which he beholds, who drives from himself the darkness of sloth and carelessness.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) For the sake then of keeping watch, our Lord advised above that our loins should be girded, and our lamps burning, for light when placed before the eyes drives away sleep. The loins also when tied with a girdle, make the body incapable of sleep. For he who is girt about with chastity, and illuminated by a pure conscience, continues wakeful.

Cyril of Alexandria. When then our Lord coming shall find us awake and girded, having our hearts enlightened, He will then pronounce us blessed, for it follows, *Verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself*; from which we perceive that He will recompense us in like manner, seeing that He will gird Himself with those that are girded. (Isa. 11:5.)

Origen. For He will be girded about His loins with righteousness.

Gregory. (Hom. 13. in Ev.) By which He girds Himself, that is, prepares for judgment.

Theophylact. Or, He will gird Himself, in that He imparts not the whole fulness of blessings, but confines it within a certain measure. For who can comprehend God how great He is? Therefore are the Seraphims said to veil their countenance, because of the excellence of the Divine brightness. It follows, *and will make them to sit down*; for as a man sitting down causes his whole body to rest, so in the future coming the Saints will have complete rest; for here they have not rest for the body, but there together with their souls their spiritual bodies partaking of immortality will rejoice in perfect rest.

Cyril of Alexandria. He will then make them to sit down as a refreshment to the weary, setting before them spiritual enjoyments, and ordering a sumptuous table of His gifts.

Pseudo-Dionysius. (Dion. in Ep. ad Tit.) The "sitting down" is taken to be the repose from many labours, a life without annoyance, the divine conversation of those that dwell in the region of light enriched with all holy affections, and an abundant pouring forth of all gifts, whereby they are filled with joy. For the reason why Jesus makes them to sit down, is that He might give them perpetual rest, and distribute to them blessings without number. Therefore it follows, *And will pass over* (transiens) *and serve them.*

Theophylact. That is, Give back to them, as it were, an equal return, that as they served Him, so also He will serve them.

Gregory. (Hom. 13. in Ev.) But He is said to be *passing over*, when He returns from the judgment to His kingdom. Or the Lord passes to us after the judgment, and raises us from the form of His humanity to a contemplation of His divinity.

Cyril of Alexandria. Our Lord knew the proneness of human infirmity to sin, but because He is merciful, He does not allow us to despair, but rather has compassion, and gives us repentance as a saving remedy. And therefore He adds, *And if he shall come in the second watch, &c.* For they who keep watch on the walls of cities, or observe the attacks of the enemy, divide the night into three or four watches.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) The first watch then is the earliest time of our life, that is, childhood, the second youth and manhood, but the third represents old age. He then who is unwilling to watch in the first, let him keep even the second. And he who is unwilling in the second, let him not lose the remedies of the third watch, that he who has neglected conversion in childhood, may at least in the time of youth or old age recover himself.

Cyril of Alexandria. Of the first watch, however, he makes no mention, for childhood is not punished by God, but obtains pardon; but the second and third age owe obedience to God, and the leading of an honest life according to His will.

Greek Expositor. (Severus.) Or, to the first watch belong those who live more carefully, as having gained the first step, but to the second, those who keep the measure of a moderate conversation, but to the third, those who are below these. And the same must be supposed of the fourth, and if it should so happen also of the fifth. For there are different measures of life, and a good rewarder metes out to every man according to his deserts.

Theophylact. Or since the watches are the hours of the night which lull men to sleep, you must understand that there are also in our life certain hours which make us happy if we are found awake. Does any one seize your goods? Are your children dead? Are you accused? But if at these times you have done nothing against the commandments of God, He will find you watching in the second and third watch, that is, at the evil time, which brings destructive sleep to idle souls.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But to shake off the sloth of our minds, even our external losses are by a similitude set before us. For it is added, *And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come.*

Theophylact. Some understand this thief to be the devil, the house, the soul, the goodman of the house, man. This interpretation, however, does not seem to agree with what follows. For the Lord's coming is compared to the thief as suddenly at hand, according to the word of the Apostle, *The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night*. (1 Thess. 5:2.) And hence also it is here added, *Be ye also ready, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.*

Gregory. (Hom. 13. in Ev.) Or else; unknown to the master the thief breaks into the house, because while the spirit sleeps instead of guarding itself, death comes unexpectedly, and breaks into the dwelling place of our flesh. But he would resist the thief if he were watching, because being on his guard against the coming of the Judge, who secretly seizes his soul, he would by repentance go to meet Him, lest he should perish impenitent. But the last hour our Lord wishes to be unknown to us, in order as we cannot foresee it, we may be unceasingly preparing for it.

12:41–46

41. Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42. And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?

43. Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46. The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.

Theophylact. Peter, to whom the Church had already been committed, as having the care of all things, inquires whether our Lord put forth this parable to all. As it follows, *Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even unto all?*

Bede. Our Lord had taught two things in the preceding parable unto all, even that He would come suddenly, and that they ought to be ready and waiting for Him. But it is not very plain concerning which of these, or whether both, Peter asked the question, or whom he compared to himself and his companions, when he said, *Speakest thou to us, or to all?* Yet in truth by these words, *us* and *all*, he must be supposed to mean none other than the Apostles, and those like to the Apostles, and all other faithful men; or Christians, and unbelievers; or those who dying separately, that is, singly, both unwillingly indeed and willingly, receive the coming of their Judge, and those who when the universal judgment comes are to be found alive in the flesh. Now it is marvellous if Peter doubted that all must live soberly, piously, and justly, who wait for a blessed hope, or that the judgment will to each and all be unexpected. It therefore remains to be supposed, that knowing these two things, he asked about that which he might not know, namely, whether those sublime commands of a heavenly life in which He bade us sell what we have and provide bags which wax not old, and watch with our loins girded, and lamps burning, belonged to the Apostles only, and those like unto them, or to all who were to be saved.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now to the courageous rightly belong the great and difficult of God's holy commandments, but to those who have not yet attained to such virtue, belong those things from which all difficulty is excluded. Our Lord therefore uses a very obvious example, to shew that the above-mentioned command is suited to those who have been admitted into the rank of disciples, for it follows, *And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful steward?*

Ambrose. Or else, the form of the first command is a general one adapted to all, but the following example seems to be proposed to the stewards, that is, the priests; and therefore it follows, *And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his Lord shall make ruler over his household, to give, them their portion of meat in due season?*

Theophylact. The above-mentioned parable relates to all the faithful in common, but now hear what suits the Apostles and teachers. For I ask, where will be found the steward, that possesses in himself faithfulness and wisdom? for as in the management of goods, whether a man be careless yet faithful to his master, or else wise yet unfaithful, the things of the master perish; so also in the things of God there is need of faithfulness and wisdom. For I have known many servants of God, and faithful men, who because they were unable to manage ecclesiastical affairs, have destroyed not only possessions, but souls, exercising towards sinners indiscreet virtue by extravagant rules of penance or unseasonable indulgence.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 77. in Matt.) But our Lord here asks the question not as ignorant, who was a faithful and wise steward, but wishing to imply the rareness of such, and the greatness of this kind of chief government.

Theophylact. Whosoever then has been found a faithful and wise steward, let him bear rule over the Lord's household, that he may give them their portion of meat in due season, either the word of doctrine by which their souls are fed, or the example of works by which their life is fashioned.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. c. 26.) Now he says *portion*, because of suiting His measure to the capacity of his several hearers.

Isidore of Peleusium. (l. 3. Ep. 170.) It was added also *in their due season*, because a benefit not conferred at its proper time is rendered vain, and loses the name of a benefit. The same bread is not equally coveted by the hungry man, and him that is satisfied. But with respect to this servant's reward for his stewardship, He adds, *Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

Basil. (in Procem. in reg. fus.) He says not, 'doing,' as if by chance, but *so doing*. For not only conquest is honourable, but to contend lawfully, which is to perform each thing as we have been commanded.

Cyril of Alexandria. Thus the faithful and wise servant prudently giving out in due season the servants' food, that is, their spiritual meat, will be blessed according to the Saviour's word, in that he will obtain still greater things, and will be thought worthy of the rewards which are due to friends. Hence it follows, *Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

Bede. For whatever difference there is in the merits of good hearers and good teachers, such also there is in their rewards; for the one whom when He cometh He finds watching, He will make to sit down; but the others whom He finds faithful and wise stewards, He will place over all that He hath, that is, over all the joys of the kingdom of heaven, not certainly that they alone shall have power over them, but that they shall more abundantly than the other saints enjoy eternal possession of them.

Theophylact. Or, *he will make him ruler over all that he hath*, not only over His own household, but that earthly things as well as heavenly shall obey him. As it was with Joshua the son of Nun, and Elias, the one commanding the sun, the other the clouds; and all the Saints as God's friends use the things of God. Whosoever also passes his life virtuously, and has kept in due submission his servants, that is, anger and desire, supplies to them their portion of food in due season; to anger indeed that he may feel it against those who hate God, but to desire that he may exercise the necessary provision for the flesh, ordering it unto God. Such an one, I say, will be set over all things which the Lord hath, being thought worthy to look into all things by the light of contemplation.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 77. in Matt.) But our Lord not only by the honours kept in store for the good, but by threats of punishment upon the bad, leads the hearer to correction, as it follows, *But if that servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming.*

Bede. Observe that it is counted among the vices of a bad servant that he thought the coming of his Lord slow, yet it is not numbered among the virtues of the good that he hoped it would come quickly, but only that he ministered faithfully. There is nothing then better than to submit patiently to be ignorant of that which can not be known, but to strive only that we be found worthy.

Theophylact. Now from not considering the time of our departure, there proceed many evils. For surely if we thought that our Lord was coming, and that the end of our life was at hand, we should sin the less. Hence it follows, *And shall begin to strike the man servants and maidens, and to eat and drink and be drunken.*

Bede. In this servant is declared the condemnation of all evil rulers, who, forsaking the fear of the Lord, not only give themselves up to pleasures, but also provoke with injuries those who are put under them. Although these words may be also understood figuratively, meaning to corrupt the hearts of the

weak by an evil example; *and to eat, drink, and be drunken*, to be absorbed in the vices and allurements of the world, which overthrow the mind of man. But concerning his punishment it is added, *The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him*, that is, the day of his judgment or death, and will cut him in sunder.

Basil. (in lib. de Sp. San. c. 16.) The body indeed is not divided, so that one part indeed should be exposed to torments, the other escape. For this is a fable, nor is it a part of just judgment when the whole has offended that half only should suffer punishment; nor is the soul cut in sunder, seeing that the whole possesses a guilty consciousness, and cooperates with the body to work evil; but its division is the eternal severing of the soul from the Spirit. For now although the grace of the Spirit is not in the unworthy, yet it seems ever to be at hand expecting their turning to salvation, but at that time it will be altogether cut off from the soul. The Holy Spirit then is the prize of the just, and the chief condemnation of sinners, since they who are unworthy will lose Him.

Bede. Or He will cut him in sunder, by separating him from the communion of the faithful, and dismissing him to those who have never attained unto the faith. Hence it follows, *And will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers;* (1 Tim. 5:8.) for *he who has no care for his own, and those of his own house, has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.*

Theophylact. Rightly also shall the unbelieving steward receive his portion with the unbelievers, because he was without true faith.

12:47–48

47. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

48. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

Theophylact. Our Lord here points to something still greater and more terrible, for the unfaithful steward shall not only be deprived of the grace he had, so that it should profit him nothing in escaping punishment, but the greatness of his dignity shall the rather become a cause of his condemnation. Hence it is said, *And that servant who knew his lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 26. in Matt.) For all things are not judged alike in all, but greater knowledge is an occasion of greater punishment. Therefore shall the Priest, committing the same sin with the people, suffer a far heavier penalty.

Cyril of Alexandria. For the man of understanding who has given up his will to baser things will shamelessly implore pardon, because he has committed an inexcusable sin, departing as it were maliciously from the will of God, but the rude or unlearned man will more reasonably ask for pardon of the avenger. Hence it is added, *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.*

Theophylact. Here some object, saying, He is deservedly punished who, knowing the will of His Lord, pursues it not; but why is the ignorant punished? Because when he might have known, be would not, but being himself slothful, was the cause of his own ignorance.

Basil. (in reg. brev. 267.) But you will say, If the one indeed received many stripes, and the other few, how do some say He assigns no end to punishments? But we must know, that what is here said assigns neither measure nor end of punishments, but their differences. For a man may deserve unquenchable fire, to either a slight or more intense degree of heat, and the worm that dieth not with greater or more violent gnawings.

Theophylact. But he goes on to shew why teachers and learned men deserve a severer punishment, as it is said, *For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.* Teachers indeed are given the grace to perform miracles, but entrusted the grace of speech and learning. But not in that which is given, He says, is any thing more to be sought, but in that which is entrusted or deposited; for the grace of the word needs increase. But from a teacher more is required, for he should not lie idle, but improve the talent of the word.

Bede. Or else, much is often given also to certain individuals, upon whom is bestowed the knowledge of God's will, and the means of performing what they know; much also is given to him to whom, together with his own salvation, is committed the care also of feeding our Lord's flock. Upon those then who are gifted with more abundant grace a heavier penalty falls; but the mildest punishment of all will be theirs, who, beyond the guilt they originally contracted, have added none besides; and in all who have added, theirs will be the more tolerable who have committed fewest iniquities.

12:49–53

49. I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?

50. But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!

51. Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division:

52. For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

53. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.

Ambrose. To stewards, that is, to Priests, the preceding words seem to have been addressed, that they may thereby know that hereafter a heavier punishment awaits them, if, intent upon the world's pleasures, they have neglected the charge of their Lord's household, and the people entrusted to their care. But as it profiteth little to be recalled from error by the fear of punishment, and far greater is the privilege of charity and love, our Lord therefore kindles in men the desire of acquiring the divine nature, saying, *I came to send fire on earth*, not indeed that He is the Consumer of good men, but the Author of good will, who purifies the golden vessels of the Lord's house, but burns up the straw and stubble.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now it is the way of holy Scripture to use sometimes the term *fire*, of holy and divine words. For as they who know how to purify gold and silver, destroy the dross by fire, so the Saviour by the teaching of the Gospel in the power of the Spirit cleanses the minds of those who believe

in Him. This then is that wholesome and useful fire by which the inhabitants of earth, in a manner cold and dead through sin, revive to a life of piety.

Chrysostom. For by the earth He now means not that which we tread under our feet, but that which was fashioned by His hands, namely, man, upon whom the Lord pours out fire for the consuming of sins, and the renewing of souls.

Titus Bostrensis. And we must here believe that Christ came down from heaven. For if He had come from earth to earth, He would not say, *I came to send fire upon the earth.*

Cyril of Alexandria. But our Lord was hastening the kindling of the fire, and hence it follows, *And what will I, save that it be kindled* [a]*?* (nisi ut accendatur) For already some of the Jews believed, of whom the first were the holy Apostles, but the fire once lighted in Judæa was about to take possession of the whole world, yet not till after the dispensation of His Passion had been accomplished. Hence it follows, *But I have a baptism to be baptized with.* For before the holy cross and His resurrection from the dead, in Judæa only was the news told of His preaching and miracles; but after that the Jews in their rage had slain the Prince of life, then commanded He His Apostles, saying, *Go and teach all nations.* (Matt. 28:19.)

Gregory. (in Ezech. lib. i. Hom. 2.) Or else, fire is sent upon the earth, when by the fiery breath of the Holy Spirit, the earthly mind has all its carnal desires burnt up, but inflamed with spiritual love, bewails the evil it has done; and so the earth is burnt, when the conscience accusing itself, the heart of the sinner is consumed in the sorrow of repentance.

Bede. But He adds, *I have a baptism to be baptized with*, that is, I have first to be sprinkled with the drops of My own Blood, and then to inflame the hearts of believers by the fire of the Spirit.

Ambrose. But so great was our Lord's condescension, that He tells us He has a desire of inspiring us with devotion, of accomplishing perfection in us, and of hastening His passion for us; as it follows, *And how am I straitened till it be accomplished?*

Bede. Some manuscripts have, "And how am I anguished," (coangor) that is, grieved. For though He had in Himself nothing to grieve Him, yet was He afflicted by our woes, and at the time of death He betrayed the anguish which He underwent not from the fear of His death, but from the delay of our redemption. For he who is troubled until he reaches perfection, is secure of perfection, for the condition of bodily affections not the dread of death offends him. For he who has put on the body must suffer all things which are of the body, hunger, thirst, vexation, sorrow; but the Divine nature knows no change from such feelings. At the same time He also shows, that in the conflict of suffering consists the death of the body, peace of mind has no struggle with grief.

Bede. But the manner in which after the baptism of His passion and the coming of the spiritual fire the earth will be burnt, He declares as follows, *Suppose ye that I am to give peace, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. What sayest thou, O Lord? Didst thou not come to give peace, Who art made peace for us? (Eph. 2:14.) making peace by Thy cross with things in earth and things in heaven; (Col. 1:20.) Who saidst, *My peace I give unto you.* (John 14:27.) But it is plain that peace is indeed a good, but sometimes hurtful, and separating us from the love of God, that is, when by it we unite with those who keep away from God. And for this reason we teach the faithful to avoid earthly bonds. Hence it follows, *For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, &c.*

Ambrose. Though the connexion would seem to be of six persons, father and son, mother and daughter, mother in law and daughter in law, yet are they five, for the mother and the mother in law may be taken as the same, since she who is the mother of the son, is the mother in law of his wife.

Chrysostom. (non occ.) Now hereby He declared a future event, for it so happened in the same house that there have been believers whose fathers wished to bring them to unbelief; but the power of Christ's doctrines has so prevailed, that fathers were left by sons, mothers by daughters, and children by parents. For the faithful in Christ were content not only to despise their own, but at the same time also to suffer all things as long as they were not without the worship of their faith. But if He were mere man, how would it have occurred to Him to conceive it possible that He should be more loved by fathers than their children were, by children than their fathers, by husbands than their wives, and they too not in one house or a hundred, but throughout the world? And not only did he predict this, but accomplish it in deed.

Ambrose. Now in a mystical sense the one house is one man, but by two we often mean the soul and the body. But if two things meet together, each one has its part; there is one which obeys, another which rules. But there are three conditions of the soul, one concerned with reason, another with desire, the third with anger. Two then are divided against three, and three against two. For by the coming of Christ, man who was material became rational. We were carnal and earthly, God sent His Spirit into our hearts, and we became spiritual children. (Gal. 4:6.) We may also say, that in the house there are five others, that is, smell, touch, taste, sight, and hearing. If then with respect to those things which we hear or see, separating the sense of sight and hearing, we shut out the worthless pleasures of the body which we take in by our taste, touch, and smell, we divide two against three, because the mind is not carried away by the allurements of vice. Or if we understand the five bodily senses, already are the vices and sins of the body divided among themselves. The flesh and the soul may also seem separated from the smell, touch, and taste of pleasure, for while the stronger sex of reason is impelled, as it were, to manly affections, the flesh strives to keep the reason more effeminate. Out of these then there spring up the motions of different desires, but when the soul returns to itself it renounces the degenerate offspring. The flesh also bewails that it is fastened down by its desires (which it has borne to itself,) as by the thorns of the world. But pleasure is a kind of daughter in law of the body and soul, and is wedded to the motions of foul desire. As long then as there remained in one house the vices conspiring together with one consent, there seemed to be no division; but when Christ sent fire upon the earth which should burn out the offences of the heart, or the sword which should pierce the very secrets of the heart, then the flesh and the soul renewed by the mysteries of regeneration cast off the bond of connection with their offspring. So that parents are divided against their children, while the intemperate man gets rid of his intemperate desires, and the soul has no more fellowship with crime. Children also are divided against parents when men having become regenerate renounce their old vices, and younger pleasure flies from the rule of piety, as from the discipline of a strict house.

Bede. Or in another way. By three are signified those who have faith in the Trinity, by two the unbelievers who depart from the unity of the faith. But the father is the devil, whose children we were by following him, but when that heavenly fire came down, it separated us from one another, and shewed us another Father who is in heaven. The mother is the Synagogue, the daughter is the Primitive Church, who had to bear the persecution of that same synagogue, from whom she derived her birth, and whom she did herself in the truth of the faith contradict. The mother in law is the Synagogue, the daughter in law the Gentile Church, for Christ the husband of the Church is the son of the Synagogue, according to the flesh. The Synagogue then was divided both against its daughter in law, and its daughter, persecuting believers of each people. But they also were divided against their mother in law and mother, because they wished to abolish the circumcision of the flesh.

12:54–57

54. And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

55. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

57. Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

Theophylact. When He spoke about preaching, and called it a sword, His hearers may have been troubled, not knowing what He meant. And therefore our Lord adds, that as men determine the state of the weather by certain signs, so ought they to know His coming. And this is what he means by saying, *When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower. And when ye see the south wind blowing, ye say, There will be heat, &c.* As if He says, Your words and works shew me to be opposed to you. Ye may therefore suppose that I came not to give peace, but the storm and whirlwind. For I am a cloud, and I come out of the west, that is, from human nature; which has been long since clothed with the thick darkness of sin. I came also to send fire, that is, to stir up heat. For I am the strong south wind, opposed to the northern coldness.

Bede. Or, they who from the change of the elements can easily when they like predetermine the state of the weather, might if they wished also understand the time of our Lord's coming from the words of the Prophets.

Cyril of Alexandria. For the prophets have in many ways foretold the mystery of Christ; it became them therefore, if they were wise, to stretch their prospect beyond to the future, nor will ignorance of the time to come avail them after the present life. For there will be wind and rain, and a future punishment by fire; and this is signified when it is said, *A shower cometh*. It became them also not to be ignorant of the time of salvation, that is, the coming of the Saviour, through whom perfect piety entered into the world. And this is meant when it is said, *Ye say that there will be heat*. Whence it follows in censure of them, *Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and the earth, but how is it that ye do not discern this time?*

Basil. (in Hexam. Hom. 6, 4.) Now we must observe, that conjectures concerning the stars are necessary to the life of man, as long as we do lot push our searches into their signs beyond due limits. For it is possible to discover some things with respect to coming rain, still more concerning heat and the force of the winds, whether partial or universal, stormy or gentle. But the great advantage that is rendered to life by these conjectures is known to every one. For it is of importance to the sailor to prognosticate the dangers of storms, to the traveller the changes of the weather, to the husbandman the abundant supply of his fruits.

Bede. But lest any of the people should allege their ignorance of the prophetical books as a reason why they could not discern the courses of the times, He carefully adds, *And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right*, shewing them that although unlearned they might still by their natural ability discern Him, who did works such as none other man did, to be above man, and to be God, and that therefore after the injustice of this world, the just judgment of the creation would come.

Origen. But had it not been implanted in our nature to judge what is right, our Lord would never have said this.

12:58–59

58. When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.

Theophylact. Our Lord having described a rightful difference, next teaches us a rightful reconciliation, saying, *When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him, &c.* As if He says, When thine adversary is bringing thee to judgment, give diligence, that is, try every method, to be released from him. Or give diligence, that is, although thou hast nothing, borrow in order that thou may be released from him, lest he summon thee before the judge, as it follows, *Lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Where thou wilt suffer want until thou payest the last farthing; and this is what He adds, *I say unto you, thou shalt not depart hence.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 16. in Matt.) It seems to me that He is speaking of the present judges, and of the way to the present judgment, and of the prison of this world. For by these things which are visible and at hand, ignorant men are wont to gain improvement. For often He gives a lesson, not only from future good and evil but from present, for the sake of His ruder hearers.

Ambrose. Or our adversary is the devil, who lays his baits for sin, that he may have those his partners in punishment who were his accomplices in crime; our adversary is also every vicious practice. Lastly, our adversary is an evil conscience, which affects us both in this world, and will accuse and betray us in the next. Let us then give heed, while we are in this life's course, that we may be delivered from every bad act as from an evil enemy. Nay, while we are going with our adversary to the magistrate, as we are in the way, we should condemn our fault. But who is the magistrate, but He in whose hands is all power? But the Magistrate delivers the guilty to the Judge, that is, to Him, to whom He gives the power over the quick and dead, namely, Jesus Christ, through Whom the secrets are made manifest, and the punishment of wicked works awarded. He delivers to the officer, and the officer casts into prison, for He says, *Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness.* (Matt. 22:12.) And he shews that His officers are the angels, of whom he says, *The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire*; (Matt. 13:49.) but it is added, *I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence till thou hast paid the very last mite*. For as they who pay money on interest do not get rid of the debt of interest before that the amount of the whole principal is paid even up to the least sum in every kind of payment, so by the compensation of love and the other acts, or by each particular kind of satisfaction the punishment of sin is cancelled.

Origen. Or else, He here introduces four characters, the adversary, the magistrate, the officer, and the judge. But with Matthew the character of the magistrate is left out, and instead of the officer *a servant* is introduced. They differ also in that the one has written *a farthing*, the other *a mite*, but each has called it the *last*. Now we say that all men have present with them two angels, a bad one who encourages them to wicked deeds, a good one who

persuades all that is best. Now the former, our adversary whenever we sin rejoices, knowing that he has an occasion for exultations and boasting with the prince of the world, who sent him. But in the Greek, "the adversary" is written with the article, to signify that he is one out of many, seeing that each individual is under the ruler of his nation. Give diligence then that you may be delivered from your adversary, or from the ruler to whom the adversary drags you, by having wisdom, justice, fortitude, and temperance. But if you have given diligence, let it be in Him who says, *I am the life*, (John 14:6.) otherwise the adversary will hale thee to the judge. Now he says, *hale*, to point out that they are forced unwillingly to condemnation. But I know no other judge but our Lord Jesus Christ who delivers to the officer. Each of us have our own officers; the officers exercise rule over us, if we owe any thing. If I paid every man every thing, I come to the officers and answer with a fearless heart, "I owe them nothing." But if I am a debtor, the officer will cast me into prison, nor will he suffer me to go out from thence until I have paid every debt. For the officer has no power to let me off even a farthing. He who forgave one debtor five hundred pence and another fifty, (Luke 7:41.) was the Lord, but the exactor is not the master, but one appointed by the master to demand the debts. But the last mite he calls slight and small, for our sins are either heavy or slight. Happy then is he who sinneth not, and next in happiness he who has sinned slightly. Even among slight sins there is diversity, otherwise he would not say until he has paid the *last* mite. For if he owes a little, he shall not come out till he pays the last mite. But he who has been guilty of a great debt, will have endless ages for his payment.

Bede. Or else, our adversary in the way is the word of God, which opposes our carnal desires in this life; from which he is delivered who is subject to its precepts. Else he will be delivered to the judge, for of contempt of God's word the sinner will be accounted guilty in the judgment of the judge. The judge will deliver him to the officer, that is, the evil spirit for punishment. He will then be cast into prison, that is, to hell, where because he will ever have to pay the penalty by suffering, but never by paying it obtain pardon, he will never come out from thence, but with that most terrible serpent the devil, will expiate everlasting punishment.

CHAP. 13

13:1–5

1. There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things?

3. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

4. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5. I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Gloss. As He had been speaking of the punishments of sinners, the story is fitly told Him of the punishment of certain particular sinners, from which He takes occasion to denounce vengeance also against other sinners: as it is said, *There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For these were followers of the opinions of Judas of Galilee, of whom Luke makes mention in the Acts of the Apostles, (Acts 5:37.) who said, that we ought to call no man master. Great numbers of them refusing to acknowledge Cæsar as their master, were therefore punished by Pilate. They said also that men ought not to offer God any sacrifices that were not ordained in the law of Moses, and so forbade to offer the sacrifices appointed by the people for the safety of the Emperor and the Roman people. Pilate then, being enraged against the Galilæans, ordered them to be slain in the midst of the very victims which they thought they might offer according to the custom of their law; so that the blood of the offerers was mingled with that of the victims offered. Now it being generally believed that these Galilæans were most justly punished, as sowing offences among the people, the rulers, eager to excite against Him the hatred of the people, relate these things to the Saviour, wishing to discover what He thought about them. But He, admitting them to be sinners, does not however judge them to have suffered such things, as though they were worse than those who suffered not. Whence it follows, *And he answered and said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, &c.*

Chrysostom. (de Laz. Conc. 3.) For God punishes some sinners by cutting off their iniquities, and appointing to them hereafter a lighter punishment, or perhaps even entirely releasing them, and correcting those who are living in wickedness by their punishment. Again, he does not punish others, that if they take heed to themselves by repentance they may escape both the present penalty and future punishment, but if they continue in their sins, suffer still greater torment.

Titus Bostrensis. And He here plainly shews, that whatever judgments are passed for the punishment of the guilty, happen not only by the authority of the judges, but the will of God. Whether therefore the judge punishes upon the strict grounds of conscience, or has some other object in his condemnation, we must ascribe the work to the Divine appointment.

Cyril of Alexandria. To save therefore the multitudes, from the intestine seditions, which were excited for the sake of religion, He adds, *but unless ye repent*, and unless ye cease to conspire against your rulers, for which ye have no divine guidance, *ye shall all likewise perish*, and your blood shall be united to that of your sacrifices.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) And herein he shews that He permitted them to suffer such things, that the heirs of the kingdom yet living might be dismayed by the dangers of others. "What then," you will say, "is this man punished, that I might become better?" Nay, but he is punished for his own crimes, and hence arises an opportunity of salvation to those who see it.

Bede. But because they repented not in the fortieth year of our Lord's Passion, the Romans coming, (whom Pilate represented, as belonging to their nation,) and beginning from Galilee, (whence our Lord's preaching had begun,) utterly destroyed that wicked nation, and defiled with human blood not only the courts of the temples, where they were wont to offer sacrifies, but also the inner parts of the doors, (where there was no entrance to the Galileans.)

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Again, there had been eighteen others crushed to death by the falling of a tower, of whom He adds the same things, as it follows, *Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay*, For he does not punish all in this life, giving them a time meet for repentance. Nor however does he reserve all for future punishment, lest men should deny His providence.

Titus Bostrensis. Now one tower is compared to the whole city, that the destruction of a part may alarm the whole. Hence it is added, *But, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*; as if He said, The whole city shall shortly be smitten if the inhabitants continue in impenitence.

Ambrose. In those whose blood Pilate mingled with the sacrifices, there seems to be a certain mystical type, which concerns all who by the compulsion of the Devil offer not a pure sacrifice, whose prayer is for a sin, (Ps. 109:7.) as it was written of Judas, who when he was amongst the sacrifices devised the betrayal of our Lord's blood.

Bede. For Pilate, who is interpreted, "The mouth of the hammerer," signifies the devil ever ready to strike. The blood expresses sin, the sacrifices good actions. Pilate then mingles the blood of the Galilæans with their sacrifices when the devil stains the alms and other good works of the faithful either by carnal indulgence, or by courting the praise of men, or any other defilement. Those men of Jerusalem also who were crushed by the falling of the tower, signify that the Jews who refuse to repent will perish within their own walls. Nor without meaning is the number eighteen given, (which number among the Greeks is made up of Ι and Η, that is, of the same letters with which the name of Jesus begins.) And it signifies that the Jews were chiefly to perish, because they would not receive the name of the Saviour. That tower represents Him who is *the tower of strength*. And this is rightly in Siloam, which is interpreted, "sent;" for it signifies Him who, sent by the Father, came into the world, and who shall grind to powder all on whom He falls.

13:6–9

6. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?

8. And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:

9. And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

Titus Bostrensis. The Jews were boasting, that while the eighteen had perished, they all remained unhurt. He therefore sets before them the parable of the fig tree, for it follows, *He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard.*

Ambrose. There was a vineyard of the Lord of hosts, which He gave for a spoil to the Gentiles. And the comparison of the fig tree to the synagogue is well chosen, because as that tree abounds with wide and spreading foliage, and deceives the hopes of its possessor with the vain expectation of promised fruit, so also in the synagogue, while its teachers are unfruitful in good works, yet magnify themselves with words as with abundant leaves, the empty shadow of the law stretches far and wide. This tree also is the only one which puts forth fruit in place of flowers. And the fruit falls, that other fruit may succeed; yet some few of the former remain, and do not fall. For the first people of the synagogue fell off as a useless fruit, in order that out of the fruitfulness of the old religion might arise the new people of the Church; yet they who were the first out of Israel whom a branch of a stronger nature bore, under the shadow of the law and the cross, in the bosom of both, stained with a double juice after the example of a ripening fig, surpassed all others in the grace of most excellent fruits; to whom it is said, *You shall sit upon twelve thrones*. Some however think the fig tree to be a figure not of the synagogue, but of wickedness and treachery; yet these differ in nothing from what has gone before, except that they choose the genus instead of the species.

Bede. The Lord Himself who established the synagogue by Moses, came born in the flesh, and frequently teaching in the synagogue, sought for the fruits of faith, but in the hearts of the Pharisees found none; therefore it follows, *And came seeking fruit on it, and found none.*

Ambrose. But our Lord sought, not because He was ignorant that the fig tree had no fruit, but that He might shew in a figure that the synagogue ought by this time to have fruit. Lastly, from what follows, He teaches that He Himself came not before the time who came after three years. For so it is said, *Then said he to the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none.* He came to Abraham, He came to Moses, He came to Mary, that is, He came in the seal of the covenant, He came in the law, He came in the body. We recognise His coming by His gifts; at one time purification, at another sanctification, at another justification. Circumcision purified, the law sanctified, grace justified. The Jewish people then could not be purified because they had not the circumcision of the heart, but of the body; nor be sanctified, because ignorant of the meaning of the law, they followed carnal things rather than spiritual; nor justified, because not working repentance for their offences, they knew nothing of grace. Rightly then was there no fruit found in the synagogue, and consequently it is ordered to be cut down; for it follows, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?* But the merciful dresser, perhaps meaning him on whom the Church is founded, foreseeing that another would be sent to the Gentiles, but he himself to them who were of the circumcision, piously intercedes that it may not be cut off; trusting to his calling, that the Jewish people also might be saved through the Church. Hence it follows, *And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also.* He soon perceived hardness of heart and pride to be the causes of the barrenness of the Jews. He knew therefore how to discipline, who knew how to censure faults. Therefore adds He, *till I shall dig about it.* He promises that the hardness of their hearts shall be dug about by the Apostles' spades, lest a heap of earth cover up and obscure the root of wisdom. And He adds, *and dung it*, that is, by the grace of humility, by which even the fig is thought to become fruitful toward the Gospel of Christ. Hence He adds, *And if it bear fruit, well*, that is, it shall be well, *but if not, then after that thou shall cut it down.*

Bede. Which indeed came to pass under the Romans, by whom the Jewish nation was cut off, and thrust out from the land of promise.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or, in another sense, the fig tree is the race of mankind. For the first man after he had sinned concealed with fig leaves his nakedness, that is, the members from which we derive our birth.

Theophylact. But each one of us also is a fig tree planted in the vineyard of God, that is, in the Church, or in the world.

Gregory. (Hom. 31. in Evang.) But our Lord came three times to the fig tree, because He sought after man's nature before the law, under the law, and

under grace, by waiting, admonishing, visiting; but yet He complains that for three years he found no fruit, for there are some wicked men whose hearts are neither corrected by the law of nature breathed into them, nor instructed by precepts, nor converted by the miracles of His incarnation.

Theophylact. Our nature yields no fruit though three times sought for; once indeed when we transgressed the commandment in paradise; the second time, when they made the molten calf under the law; thirdly, when they rejected the Saviour. But that three years' time must be understood to mean also the three ages of life, boyhood, manhood, and old age.

Gregory. (ubi. sup.) But with great fear and trembling should we hear the word which follows, *Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground.* For every one according to his measure, in whatsoever station of life he is, except he shew forth the fruits of good works, like an unfruitful tree, cumbereth the ground; for wherever he is himself placed, he there denies to another the opportunity of working.

Pseudo-Basil. (De Pœnit.) For it is the part of God's mercy not silently to inflict punishment, but to send forth threatenings to recall the sinner to repentance, as He did to the men of Nineveh, and now to the dresser of the vineyard, saying, *Cut it down*, exciting him indeed to the care of it, and stirring up the barren soil to bring forth the proper fruits.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 32.) Let us not then strike suddenly, but overcome by gentleness, lest we cut down the fig tree still able to bear fruit, which the care perhaps of a skilful dresser will restore. Hence it is also here added, *And he answering said unto him, Lord, let alone, &c.*

Gregory. (31. in Ev.) By the dresser of the vineyard is represented the order of Bishops, who, by ruling over the Church, take care of our Lord's vineyard.

Theophylact. Or the master of the household is God the Father, the dresser is Christ, who will not have the fig tree cut down as barren, as if saying to the Father, Although through the Law and the Prophets they gave no fruit of repentance, I will water them with My sufferings and teaching, and perhaps they will yield us fruits of obedience.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or, the husbandman who intercedes is every holy man who within the Church prays for them that are without the Church, saying, *O Lord, O Lord, let it alone this year*, that is, for that time vouchsafed under grace, *until I dig about it.* To dig about it, is to teach humility and patience, for the ground which has been dug is lowly. The dung signifies the soiled garments, but they bring forth fruit. The soiled garment of the dresser, is the grief and mourning of sinners; for they who do penance and do it truly are in soiled garments.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Or, the sins of the flesh are called the dung. From this then the tree revives to bear fruit again, for from the remembrance of sin the soul quickens itself to good works. But there are very many who hear reproof, and yet despise the return to repentance; wherefore it is added, *And if it bear fruit, well.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) That is, it will be well, *but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down*; namely, when Thou shalt come to judge the quick and the dead. In the mean time it is now spared.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But he who will not by correction grow rich unto fruitfulness, falls to that place from whence he is no more able to rise again by repentance.

13:10–17

10. And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath.

11. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

12. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13. And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.

15. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16. And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?

17. And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

Ambrose. He soon explained that He had been speaking of the synagogue, shewing, that He truly came to it, who preached in it, as it is said, *And he was teaching in one of the synagogues.*

Chrysostom. He teaches indeed not separately, but in the synagogues; calmly, neither wavering in any thing, nor determining aught against the law of Moses; on the Sabbath also, because the Jews were then engaged in the hearing of the law.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now that the Incarnation of the Word was manifested to destroy corruption and death, and the hatred of the devil against us, is plain from the actual events; for it follows, *And behold there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity, &c.* He says *spirit of infirmity*, because the woman suffered from the cruelty of the devil, forsaken by God because of her own crimes or for the transgression of Adam, on account of which the bodies of men incur infirmity and death. But God gives this power to the Devil, to the end that men when pressed down by the weight of their adversity might betake them to better things. He points out the nature of her infirmity, saying, *And was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.*

Basil. (Hom. 9. in Hex.) Because the head of the brutes is bent down towards the ground and looks upon the earth, but the head of man was made erect

towards the heaven, his eyes tending upward. For it becomes us to seek what is above, and with our sight to pierce beyond earthly things.

Cyril of Alexandria. But our Lord, to shew that His coming into this world was to be the loosing of human infirmities, healed this woman. Hence it follows, *And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity*. A word most suitable to God, full of heavenly majesty; for by His royal assent He dispels the disease. He also laid His hands upon her, for it follows, *He laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God*. We should here answer, that the Divine power had put on the sacred flesh. For it was the flesh of God Himself, and of no other, as if the Son of Man existed apart from the Son of God, as some have falsely thought. But the ungrateful ruler of the synagogue, when he saw the woman, who before was creeping on the ground, now by Christ's single touch made upright, and relating the mighty works of God, sullies his zeal for the glory of the Lord with envy, and condemns the miracle, that he might appear to be jealous for the Sabbath. As it follows, *And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work, and not on the sabbath-day*. He would have those who are dispersed about on the other days, and engaged in their own works, not come on the Sabbath to see and admire our Lord's miracles, lest by chance they should believe. But the law has not forbidden all manual work on the Sabbath-day, and has it forbidden that which is done by a word or the mouth? Cease then both to eat and drink and speak and sing. And if thou readest not the law, how is it a Sabbath to thee? But supposing the law has forbidden manual works, how is it a manual work to raise a woman upright by a word?

Ambrose. Lastly, God rested from the works of the world not from holy works, for His working is constant and everlasting; as the Son says, *My Father worketh until now, and I work*; (John 5:17.) that after the likeness of God our worldly, not our religious, works should cease. Accordingly our Lord pointedly answered him, as it follows, *Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath-day loose his ox or his ass? &c.*

Basil. (Basil. Hom. 1. de Jej.) The hypocrite is one who on the stage assumes a different character from his own. So also in this life some men carry one thing in their heart, and shew another on the surface to the world.

Chrysostom. Well then does he call the ruler of the synagogue a hypocrite, for he had the appearance of an observer of the law, but in his heart was a crafty and envious man. For it troubles him not that the Sabbath is broken, but that Christ is glorified. Now observe, that whenever Christ orders a *work* to be done, (as when He ordered the man sick of the palsy to take up his bed,) He raises His words to something higher, convincing men by the majesty of the Father, as He says, *My Father worketh until now, and I work*. (John 5:17.) But in this place, as doing every thing by *word*, He adds nothing further, refuting their calumny by the very things which they themselves did.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now the ruler of the synagogue is convicted a hypocrite, in that he leads his cattle to watering on the Sabbath-day, but this woman, not more by birth than by faith the daughter of Abraham, he thought unworthy to be loosed from the chain of her infirmity. Therefore He adds, *And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, to be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?* The ruler preferred that this woman should like the beasts rather look upon the earth than receive her natural stature, provided that Christ was not magnified. But they had nothing to answer; they themselves unanswerably condemned themselves. Hence it follows, *And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed*. But the people, reaping great good from His miracles, rejoiced at the signs which they saw, as it follows, *And all the people rejoiced*. For the glory of His works vanquished every scruple in them who sought Him not with corrupt hearts.

Gregory. (Hom. 31. in Evang.) Mystically the unfruitful fig tree signifies the woman that was bowed down. For human nature of its own will rushes into sin, and as it would not bring forth the fruit of obedience, has lost the state of uprightness. The same fig tree preserved signifies the woman made upright.

Ambrose. Or the fig tree represents the synagogue; afterwards in the infirm woman there follows as it were a figure of the Church, which having fulfilled the measure of the law and the resurrection, and now raised up on high in that eternal resting place, can no more experience the frailty of our weak inclinations. Nor could this woman be healed except she had fulfilled the law and grace. For in ten sentences is contained the perfection of the law, and in the number eight the fulness of the resurrection.

Gregory. (ut sup.) Or else; man was made on the sixth day, and on the same sixth day were all the works of the Lord finished, but the number six multiplied three times makes eighteen. Because then man who was made on the sixth day was unwilling to do perfect works, but before the law, under the law, and at the beginning of grace, was weak, the woman was bowed down eighteen years.

Augustine. (Serm. 110.) That which the three years signified in the tree, the eighteen did in the woman, for three times six is eighteen. But she was crooked and could not look up, for in vain she heard the words, *lift up your hearts*.

Gregory. (up sup.) For every sinner who thinketh earthly things, not seeking those that are in heaven, is unable to look up. For while pursuing his baser desires, he declines from the uprightness of his state; or his heart is bent crooked, and he ever looks upon that which he unceasingly thinks about. The Lord called her and made her upright, for He enlightened her and succoured her. He sometimes calls but does not make upright, for when we are enlightened by grace, we ofttimes see what should be done, but because of sin do not practise it. For habitual sin binds down the mind, so that it cannot rise to uprightness. It makes attempts and fails, because when it has long stood by its own will, when the will is lacking, it falls.

Ambrose. Now this miracle is a sign of the coming sabbath, when every one who has fulfilled the law and grace, shall by the mercy of God put off the toils of this weak body. But why did He not mention any more animals, save to shew that the time would come when the Jewish and Gentile nations should quench their bodily thirst, and this world's heat in the fulness of the fountain of the Lord, and so through the calling forth of two nations, the Church should be saved.

Bede. But the daughter of Abraham is every faithful soul, or the Church gathered out of both nations into the unity of the faith. There is the same mystery then in the ox or ass being loosed and led to water, as in the daughter of Abraham being released from the bondage of our affections.

18. Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19. It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20. And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21. It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Gloss. While His adversaries were ashamed, and the people rejoiced, at the glorious things that were done by Christ, He proceeds to explain the progress of the Gospel under certain similitudes, as it follows, *Then said he, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? It is like a grain of mustard seed, &c.* (Mat. 17:19.)

Ambrose. In another place, a grain of mustard seed is introduced where it is compared to faith. If then the mustard seed is the kingdom of God, and faith is as the grain of mustard seed; faith is truly the kingdom of heaven, which is within us. (Luke 17:21.) A grain of mustard seed is indeed a mean and trifling thing, but as soon as it is crushed, it pours forth its power. And faith at first seems simple, but when it is buffeted by adversity, pours forth the grace of its virtue. The martyrs are grains of mustard seed. They have about them the sweet odour of faith, but it is hidden. Persecution comes; they are smitten by the sword; and to the farthest boundaries of the whole world they have scattered the seeds of their martyrdom. The Lord Himself also is a grain of mustard seed; He wished to be bruised that we might see that we are *a sweet savour of Christ.* (2 Cor. 2:15.) He wishes to be sown as a grain of mustard seed, which when a man takes he puts it into his garden. For Christ was taken and buried in a garden, where also He rose again and became a tree, as it follows, *And it waxed into a great tree.* For our Lord is a grain when He is buried in the earth, a tree when He is lifted up into the heaven. He is also a tree overshadowing the world, as it follows, *And the fowls of the air rested in his branches*; that is, the heavenly powers and they whoever (for their spiritual deeds) have been thought worthy to fly forth. Peter is a branch, Paul is a branch, into whose arms, by certain hidden ways of disputation, we who were a far off now fly, having taken up the wings of the virtues. Sow then Christ in thy garden; a garden is truly a place full of flowers, wherein the grace of thy work may blossom, and the manifold odour of thy different virtues be breathed forth. Wherever is the fruit of the seed, there is Christ.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else; The kingdom of God is the Gospel, through which we gain the power of reigning with Christ. As then the mustard seed is surpassed in size by the seeds of other herbs, yet so increases as to become the shelter of many birds; so also the life-giving doctrine was at first in the possession only of a few, but afterwards spread itself abroad.

Bede. Now the *man*, is Christ, the *garden*, His Church, to be cultivated by His discipline. He is well said to have taken the grain, because the gifts which He together with the Father gave to us from His divinity, He took from His humanity. But the preaching of the Gospel grew and was disseminated throughout the whole world. It grows also in the mind of every believer, for no one is suddenly made perfect. But in its growth, not like the grass, (which soon withers,) but it rises up like the trees. The branches of this tree are the manifold doctrines, on which the chaste souls, soaring upwards on the wings of virtue, build and repose.

Theophylact. Or, any man receiving a grain of mustard seed, that is, the word of the Gospel, and sowing it in the garden of his soul, makes it a great tree, so as to bring forth branches, and the birds of the air (that is, they who soar above the earth) rest in the branches, (that is, in sublime contemplation.) For Paul received the instruction of Ananias (Acts 9:17.) as it were a small grain, but planting it in his garden, he brought forth many good doctrines, in which they dwell who have high heavenly thoughts, as Dionysius, Hierotheus, and many others.

He next likens the kingdom of God to leaven, for it follows, *And again he says, Whereunto shall I liken it? It is like to leaven, &c.*

Ambrose. Many think Christ is the leaven, for leaven which is made from meal, excels its kind in strength, not in appearance. So also Christ (according to the Fathers) shone forth above others equal in body, but unapproachable in excellence. The Holy Church therefore represents the type of the woman, of whom it is added, *Which a woman, took and hid in three measures* (sata) *of meal, till the whole was leavened.*

Bede. The Satum is a kind of measure in use in the province of Palestine, holding about a bushel and a half.

Ambrose. But we are the meal of the woman which hide the Lord Jesus in the secrets of our hearts, until the heat of heavenly wisdom penetrates our innermost recesses. And since He says it was hid in three measures, it seems fitting that we should believe the Son of God to have been hid in the Law, veiled in the Prophets, manifested in the preaching of the Gospel. Here however I am invited to proceed farther, because our Lord Himself has taught us, that the leaven is the spiritual teaching of the Church. Now the Church sanctifies with its spiritual leaven the man who is renewed in body, soul, and spirit, seeing that these three are united in a certain equal measure of desire, and there breathes forth a complete harmony of the will. If then in this life the three measures abide in the same person until they are leavened and become one, there will be hereafter an incorruptible communion with them that love Christ.

Theophylact. Or, for the woman you must understand the soul; but the three measures, its three parts, the reasoning part, the affections, and the desires. If then any one has hidden in these three the word of God, he will make the whole spiritual, so as not by his reason to lie in argument, nor by his anger or desire to be transported beyond control, but to be conformed to the word of God.

Augustine. (Serm. 111.) Or, the three measures of meal are the race of mankind, which was restored out of the three sons of Noah. The woman who hid the leaven is the wisdom of God.

Eusebius. Or else, by the leaven our Lord means the Holy Spirit, the Sower proceeding (as it were) from the seed, which is the word of God. But the three measures of meal, signify the knowledge of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which the woman, that is, Divine wisdom, and the Holy Spirit, impart.

Bede. Or, by the leaven He speaks of love, which kindles and stirs up the heart; the woman, that is, the Church, hides the leaven of love in three measures, because she bids us love God with all our hearts, all our minds, and all our strength. And this until the whole is leavened, that is, until love moves the whole soul into the perfection of itself, which begins here, but will be completed hereafter.

22. And he went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.

23. Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24. Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are:

26. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

29. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

Gloss. Having spoken in parables concerning the increase of the teaching of the Gospel, He every where endeavours to spread it by preaching. Hence it is said, *And he went through the cities and villages.*

Theophylact. For he did not visit the small places only, as they do who wish to deceive the simple, nor the cities only, as they who are fond of show, and seek their own glory; but as their common Lord and Father providing for all, He went about every where. Nor again did He visit the country towns only, avoiding Jerusalem, as if He feared the cavils of the lawyers, or death, which might follow therefrom; and hence he adds, *And journeying towards Jerusalem.* For where there were many sick, there the Physician chiefly shewed Himself. It follows, *Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved?*

Gloss. This question seems to have reference to what had gone before. For in the parable which was given above, He had said, *that the birds of the air rested on its branches*, by which it might be supposed that there would be many who would obtain the rest of salvation. And because one had asked the question for all, the Lord does not answer him individually, as it follows, *And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate.*

Basil. (in reg. ad int. 240.) For as in earthly life the departure from right is exceeding broad, so he who goes out of the path which leads to the kingdom of heaven, finds himself in a vast extent of error. (int. 241.). But the right way is narrow, the slightest turning aside being full of danger, whether to the right or to the left, as on a bridge, where he who slips on either side is thrown into the river.

Cyril of Alexandria. The narrow gate also represents the toils and sufferings of the saints. For as a victory in battle bears witness to the strength of the soldiers, so a courageous endurance of labours and temptations will make a man strong.

Chrysostom. (24, 40. in Matt.) What then is that which our Lord says elsewhere, *My yoke is easy, and my burden is light?* (Matt. 11:30.) There is indeed no contradiction, but the one was said because of the nature of temptations, the other with respect to the feeling of those who overcame them. For whatever is troublesome to our nature may be considered easy when we undertake it heartily. Besides also, though the way of salvation is narrow at its entrance, yet through it we come into a large space, but on the contrary the broad way leadeth to destruction.

Gregory. (Mor. 11. c. 50.) Now when He was about to speak of the entrance of the narrow gate, He said first, *strive*, for unless the mind struggles manfully, the wave of the world is not overcome, by which the soul is ever thrown back again into the deep.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now our Lord does not seem to satisfy him who asked whether there are few that be saved, when He declares the way by which man may become righteous. But it must be observed, that it was our Saviour's custom to answer those who asked Him, not according as they might judge right, as often as they put to Him useless questions, but with regard to what might be profitable to His hearers. And what advantage would it have been to His hearers to know whether there should be many or few who would be saved. But it was more necessary to know the way by which man may come to salvation. Purposely then He says nothing in answer to the idle question, but turns His discourse to a more important subject.

Augustine. (Serm. 111.) Or else, our Lord confirmed the words He heard, that is, by saying that there are few who are saved, for few enter by the strait gate, but in another place He says this very thing, *Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there are who enter into it.* (Matt. 7:14.) Therefore He adds, *For many I say unto you shall seek to enter*;

Bede. Urged thereto by their love of safety, yet shall not be able, frightened by the roughness of the road.

Basil. (Hom. in Psalm 1, 15.) For the soul wavers to and fro, at one time choosing virtue when it considers eternity, at another preferring pleasures when it looks to the present. Here it beholds ease, or the delights of the flesh, there its subjection or captive bondage; here drunkenness, there sobriety; here wanton mirth, there overflowing of tears; here dancing, there praying; here the sound of the pipe, there weeping; here lust, there chastity.

Augustine. (Serm. 111.) Now our Lord in no wise contradicts Himself when He says, *that there are few who enter in at the strait gate*, and elsewhere, *Many shall come from the east and the west*; (Matt. 8:11.) for there are few in comparison with those who are lost, many when united with the angels. Scarcely do they seem a grain when the threshing floor is swept, but so great a mass will come forth from this floor, that it will fill the granary of heaven.

Cyril of Alexandria. But that they who cannot enter are regarded with wrath, He has shewn by an obvious example, as follows, *When once the master of the house has risen up, &c.* as if when the master of the house who has called many to the banquet has entered in with his guests, and shut to the door, then shall come afterwards men knocking.

Bede. The master of the house is Christ, who since as very God He is every where, is already said to be within those whom though He is in heaven He gladdens with His visible presence, but is as it were without to those whom while contending in this pilgrimage, He helps in secret. But He will enter in when He shall bring the whole Church to the contemplation of Himself. He will shut the door when He shall take away from the reprobate all room for repentance. Who standing without will knock, that is, separated from the righteous will in vain implore that mercy which they have despised. Therefore it follows, *And he will answer and say to you, I know you not whence ye are.*

Gregory. (Moral. 2. c. 5.) For God not to know is for Him to reject, as also a man who speaks the truth is said not to know how to lie, for he disdains to sin by telling a lie, not that if he wished to lie he knew not how, but that from love of truth he scorns to speak what is false. Therefore the light of truth knows not the darkness which it condemns. It follows, *Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. This refers to the Israelites, who, according to the practice of their law, when offering victims to God, eat and are merry. They heard also in the synagogues the books of Moses, who in his writings delivered not his own words, but the words of God.

Theophylact. Or it is said to the Israelites, simply because Christ was born of them according to the flesh, and they ate and drank with Him, and heard Him preaching. But these things also apply to Christians. For we eat the body of Christ and drink His blood as often as we approach the mystic table, and He teaches in the streets of our souls, which are open to receive Him.

Bede. Or mystically, he eats and drinks in the Lord's presence who eagerly receives the food of the word. Hence it is added for explanation, *Thou hast taught in our streets*. For Scripture in its more obscure places is food, since by being expounded it is as it were broken and swallowed. In the clearer places it is drink, where it is taken down just as it is found. But at a feast the banquet does not delight him whom the piety of faith commends not. The knowledge of the Scriptures does not make him known to God, whom the iniquity of his works proves to be unworthy; as it follows, *And he will say unto you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me.*

Basil. (reg. brev. ad int. 282.) He perhaps speaks to those whom the Apostle describes in his own person, saying, *If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have all knowledge, and give all my goods to feed the poor, but have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.* For whatever is done not from regard to the love of God, but to gain praise from men, obtains no praise from God.

Theophylact. Observe also that they are objects of wrath in whose street the Lord teaches. If then we have heard Him teaching not in the streets, but in poor and lowly hearts, we shall not be regarded with wrath.

Bede. But the twofold punishment of hell is here described, that is, the feeling cold and heat. For weeping is wont to be excited by heat, gnashing of teeth by cold. Or gnashing of teeth betrays the feeling of indignation, that he who repents too late, is too late angry with himself.

Gloss. Or the teeth will gnash which here delighted in eating, the eyes will weep which here wandered with desire. By each He represents the real resurrection of the wicked.

Theophylact. This also refers to the Israelites with whom He was speaking, who receive from this their severest blow, that the Gentiles have rest with the fathers, while they themselves are shut out. Hence He adds, *When you shall see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, &c.*

Eusebius. For the Fathers above mentioned, before the times of the Law, forsaking the sins of many gods to follow the Gospel way, received the knowledge of the most high God; to whom many of the Gentiles were conformed through a similar manner of life, but their children suffered estrangement from the Gospel rules; and herein it follows, *And behold they are last which shall be first, and they are first which shall be last.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For to the Jews who held the first place have the Gentiles been preferred.

Theophylact. But we as it seems are the first who have received from our very cradles the rudiments of Christian teaching, and perhaps shall be last in respect of the heathens who have believed at the end of life.

Bede. Many also at first burning with zeal, afterwards grow cold; many at first cold, on a sudden become warm; many despised in this world, will be glorified in the world to come; others renowned among men, will in the end be condemned.

13:31–35

31. The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.

32. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

33. Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

34. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

35. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Cyril of Alexandria. The preceding words of our Lord roused the Pharisees to anger. For they perceived that the people were now smitten in their hearts, and eagerly receiving His faith. For fear then of losing their office as rulers of the people, and lacking their gains, with pretended love for Him, they persuade Him to depart from hence, as it is said, *The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee*: but Christ, who searcheth the heart and the reins, answers them meekly and under figure. Hence it follows, *And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox.*

Bede. Because of his wiles and stratagems He calls Herod a fox, which is an animal full of craft, concealing itself in a ditch because of snares, having a noisome smell, never walking in straight paths, all which things belong to heretics, of whom Herod is a type, who endeavours to destroy Christ (that is, the humility of the Christian faith) in the hearts of believers.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else the discourse seems to change here, and not to refer so much to the character of Herod as some think, as to the lies of the Pharisees. For He almost represents the Pharisees themselves to be standing near, when He said, *Go tell this fox*, as it is in the Greek. Therefore he commanded them to say that which might rouse the multitude of Pharisees. *Behold*, said He, *I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and on the third day I shall be perfected.* He promises to do what was displeasing to the Jews, namely, to command the evil spirits, and deliver the sick from disease, until in His own person He should undergo the suffering of the cross. But because the Pharisees thought that He who was the Lord of hosts, feared the hand of Herod. He refutes this, saying, *Nevertheless I must walk to day and to morrow, and the day following.* When He says *must*, He by no means implies a necessity imposed upon Him, but rather that He walked where He liked according to the inclination of His will, until He should come to the end of the dreadful cross, the time of which Christ shews to be now drawing near, when He says, *To day and to morrow.*

Theophylact. As if He says, What think ye of My death? Behold, a little while, and it will come to pass. But by the words, *To day and to morrow*, are signified many days; as we also are wont to say in common conversation, "To day and to morrow such a thing takes place," not that it happens in that interval of time. And to explain more clearly the words of the Gospel, you must not understand them to be, *I must walk to day and to morrow*, but place a stop after *to day and to morrow*, then add, *and walk on the day following*, as frequently in reckoning we are accustomed to say, "The Lord's day and the day after, and on the third I will go out," as if by reckoning two, to denote the third. So also our Lord speaks as if calculating, I must do so to day, and so to morrow, and then afterward on the third day I must go to Jerusalem.

Augustine. (con. Julian. lib. 6. c. 19.) Or these things are understood to have been spoken mystically by Him, so as to refer to His body, which is the Church. For devils are cast out when the Gentiles having forsaken their superstition, believe in Him. And cures are perfected when according to His commands, after having renounced the devil and this world until the end of the resurrection, (by which as it were the third day will be completed,) the Church shall be perfected in angelical fulness by the immortality also of the body.

Theophylact. But because they said unto Him, *Depart from hence, for Herod seeks to kill thee*, speaking in Galilee where Herod reigned, He shews that not in Galilee, but in Jerusalem it had been fore-ordained that He should suffer. Hence it follows, *For it can not be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.* When thou hearest, *It can not be* (or it is not fitting) *that a prophet should perish out of Jerusalem*, think not that any violent constraint was imposed upon the Jews, but He says this seasonably with reference to their eager desire after blood; just as if any one seeing a most savage robber, should say, the road on which this robber lurks can not be without bloodshed to travellers. So also no where else but in the abode of robbers must the Lord of the prophets perish. For accustomed to the blood of His prophets, they will also kill the Lord; as it follows, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets.*

Bede. In calling upon Jerusalem, He addresses not the stones and buildings of the city, but the dwellers therein, and He weeps over it with the affection of a father.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 75. in Matt.) For the twice repeated word betokens compassion or very great love. For the Lord speaks, if we may say it, as a lover would to his mistress who despised him, and was therefore about to be punished.

Greek Expositor. (Severus.) But the repetition of the name also shews the rebuke to be severe. For she who knew God, how does she persecute God's ministers?

Cyril of Alexandria. Now that they were unmindful of the Divine blessings He proves as follows, *How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.* He led them by the hand of Moses full of &c., He warns them by His prophets, He wished to have them under His wings, (i. e. under the shelter of His power,) but they deprived themselves of these choice blessings, through their ingratitude.

Augustine. (Enchir. 97.) As many as I gathered together, it was done by my all prevailing will, yet thy unwillingness, for thou wert ever ungrateful.

Bede. Now He who aptly had called Herod a fox, who was plotting His death, compares Himself to a bird, for foxes are ever lying in wait for birds.

Basil. (in Esaiam c. 16. §. 301.) He compared also the sons of Jerusalem to birds in the net, as if He said, Birds who are used to fly in the air are caught by the treacherous devices of the catchers, but thou shalt be as a chicken in want of another's protection; when thy mother then has fled away, thou art taken from thy nest as too weak to defend thyself, too feeble to fly; as it follows, *Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

Bede. The city itself which He had called the nest, He now calls the house of the Jews; for when our Lord was slain, the Romans came, and plundering it as a deserted nest, took away both their place, nation, and kingdom.

Theophylact. Or your house, (that is, temple,) as if He says, As long as there was virtue in you, it was my temple, but after that you made it a den of thieves, it was no more my house but yours. Or by house He meant the whole Jewish nation, according to the Psalm, *O house of Jacob, bless ye the Lord*, (Psalm 135:20.) by which he shews that it was He Himself who governed them, and took them out of the hand of their enemies. It follows, *And verily I say unto you, &c.*

Augustine. (de Cons. Ev. lib. 2. c. 72.) There seems nothing opposed to St. Luke's narrative, in what the multitudes said when our Lord came to Jerusalem, *Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord*, (Mat. 21:9.) for He had not as yet come thither, nor had this yet been spoken.

Cyril of Alexandria. For our Lord had departed from Jerusalem, as it were abandoning those who were unworthy of His presence, and afterwards returned to Jerusalem, having performed many miracles, when that crowd meets Him, saying, *Osanna to the Son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

Augustine. (de Cons. Ev. ubi sup.) But as Luke does not say to what place our Lord went from thence, so that He should not come except at that time, (for when this was spoken He was journeying onward until He should come to Jerusalem,) He means therefore to refer to that coming of His, when He should appear in glory.

Theophylact. For then also will they unwillingly confess Him to be their Lord and Saviour, when there shall be no departure hence. But in saying, *Ye shall not see me until he shall come, &c.* does not signify that present hour, but the time of His cross; as if He says, When ye have crucified Me, ye shall no more see Me until I come again.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Luke must be understood then as wishing to anticipate here, before his narrative brought our Lord to Jerusalem, or to make Him when approaching the same city, give an answer to those who told Him to beware of Herod, like to that which Matthew says He gave when He had

already reached Jerusalem.

Bede. Ye shall not see, that is, unless ye have worked repentance, and confessed Me to be the Son of the Father Almighty, ye shall not see My face at the second coming.

CHAP. 14

14:1–6

1. And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him.

2. And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3. And Jesus answering spake unto the Lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?

4. And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;

5. And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?

6. And they could not answer him again to these things.

Cyril of Alexandria. Although our Lord knew the malice of the Pharisees, yet He became their guest, that He might benefit by His words and miracles those who were present. Whence it follows, *And it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day, that they watched him*; to see whether He would despise the observance of the law, or do any thing that was forbidden on the sabbath day. When then the man with the dropsy came into the midst of them, He rebukes by a question the insolence of the Pharisees, who wished to detect Him; as it is said, *And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, &c.*

Bede. When it is said that *Jesus answered*, there is a reference to the words which went before, *And they watched him.* For the Lord knew the thoughts of men.

Theophylact. But by His question He exposes their folly. For while God blessed the sabbath, (Gen. 2:1.) they forbade to do good on the sabbath; but the day which does not admit the works of the good is accursed.

Bede. But they who were asked, are rightly silent, for they perceived that whatever they said, would be against themselves. For if it is lawful to heal on the sabbath day, why did they watch the Saviour whether He would heal? If it is not lawful, why do they take care of their cattle on the sabbath? Hence it follows, *But they held their peace.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Disregarding then the snares of the Jews, He cures the dropsical, who from fear of the Pharisees did not ask to be healed on account of the sabbath, but only stood up, that when Jesus beheld him, He might have compassion on him and heal him. And the Lord knowing this, asked not whether he wished to be made whole, but forthwith healed him. Whence it follows; *And he took him, and healed him, and let him go.* Wherein our Lord took no thought not to offend the Pharisees, but only that He might benefit him who needed healing. For it becomes us, when a great good is the result, not to care if fools take offence.

Cyril of Alexandria. But seeing the Pharisees awkwardly silent, Christ baffles their determined impudence by some important considerations. As it follows; *And he answered and said unto them, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?*

Theophylact. As though He said, If the law forbids to have mercy on the sabbath-day, have no care of thy son when in danger on the sabbath-day. But why speak I of a son, when thou dost not even neglect an ox if thou seest it in danger?

Bede. By these words He so refutes His watchers, the Pharisees, as to condemn them also of covetousness, who in the deliverance of animals consult their own desire of wealth. How much more then ought Christ to deliver a man, who is much better than cattle!

Augustine. (de Quæst. Evan. lib. 2. cap. 29.) Now He has aptly compared the dropsical man to an animal which has fallen into a ditch, (for he is troubled by water,) as He compared that woman, whom He spoke of as bound, and whom He Himself loosed, to a beast which is let loose to be led to water.

Bede. By a suitable example then He settles the question, shewing that they violate the sabbath by a work of covetousness, who contend that he does so by a work of charity. Hence it follows, *And they could not answer him again to these things.* Mystically, the dropsical man is compared to him who is weighed down by an overflowing stream of carnal pleasures. For the disease of dropsy derives the name from a watery humour.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or we rightly compare the dropsical man to a covetous rich man. For as the former, the more he increases in unnatural moisture the greater his thirst; so also the other, the more abundant his riches, which he does not employ well, the more ardently he desires them.

Gregory. (14 Mor. c. 6.) Rightly then is the dropsical man healed in the Pharisees' presence, for by the bodily infirmity of the one, is expressed the mental disease of the other.

Bede. In this example also He well refers to the ox and the ass; so as to represent either the wise and the foolish, or both nations; that is, the Jew oppressed by the burden of the law, the Gentile not subject to reason. For the Lord rescues from the pit of concupiscence all who are sunk therein.

14:7–11

7. And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8. When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him;

9. And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Ambrose. First the dropsical man is cured, in whom the abundant discharges of the flesh crushed down the powers of the soul, quenched the ardour of the Spirit. Next, humility is taught, when at the nuptial feast the desire of the highest place is forbidden. As it is said, *And he spake, Sit not down in the highest room.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For to rush forward hastily to honours which are not fitting for us, indicates rashness and casts a slur upon our actions. Hence it follows, *lest a more honourable man than thou be invited, &c.*

Chrysostom. (non occ.) And so the seeker of honour obtained not that which he coveted, but suffered a defeat, and busying himself how he might be loaded with honours, is treated with dishonour. And because nothing is of so much worth as modesty, He leads His hearer to the opposite of this seeking; not only forbidding him to seek the highest place, but bidding him search for the lowest. As it follows; *But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For if a man wishes not to be set before others, he obtains this honour according to the divine word. As it follows; *That when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher.* In these words He does not harshly chide, but gently admonishes; for a word of advice is enough for the wise. And thus for their humility men are crowned with honours; as it follows, *Then shall thou have worship.*

Basil. (in reg. fus. ad inter. 12.) To take then the lowest place at a feast, according to our Lord's command, is becoming to every man, but again to rush contentiously after this is to be condemned as a breach of order and cause of tumult; and a strife raised about it, will place you on a level with those who dispute concerning the highest place. Wherefore, as our Lord here says, it becomes him who makes the feast to arrange the order of sitting down. Thus in patience and love should we mutually bear ourselves, following all things decently according to order, not for external appearance or public display; nor should we seem to study or affect humility by violent contradiction, but rather gain it by condescension or by patience. For resistance or opposition is a far stronger token of pride than taking the first seat at meat, when we obtain it by authority.

Theophylact. Now let no one deem the above precepts of Christ to be trifling, and unworthy of the sublimity and grandeur of the Word of God. For you would not call him a merciful physician who professed to heal the gout, but refused to cure a scar on the finger or a tooth-ache. Besides, how can that passion of vainglory appear slight, which moved or agitated those who sought the first seats. It became then the Master of humility to cut off every branch of the bad root. But observe this also, that when the supper was ready, and the wretched guests were contending for precedency before the eyes of the Saviour, there was a fit occasion for advice.

Cyril of Alexandria. Having shewn therefore from so slight an example the degradation of the ambitious and the exaltation of the humbleminded, He adds a great thing to a little, pronouncing a general sentence, as it follows, *For every one who exalts himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* This is spoken according to the divine judgment, not after human experience, in which they who desire after glory obtain it, while others who humble themselves remain inglorious.

Theophylact. Moreover, he is not to be respected in the end, nor by all men, who thrusts himself into honours; but while by some he is honoured, by others he is disparaged, and sometimes even by the very men who outwardly honour him.

Bede. But as the Evangelist calls this admonition a parable, we must briefly examine what is its mystical meaning. Whosoever being bidden has come to the marriage feast of Christ's Church, being united to the members of the Church by faith, let him not exalt himself as higher than others by boasting of his merits. For he will have to give place to one more honourable who is bidden afterwards, seeing that he is overtaken by the activity of those who followed him, and with shame he occupies the lowest place, now that knowing better things of the others he brings low whatever high thoughts he once had of his own works. But a man sits in the lowest place according to that verse, *The greater thou art, humble thyself in all things.* (Eccles. 3:18.) But the Lord when He cometh, whomsoever He shall find humble, blessing him with the name of friend, He will command him to go up higher. For whoever humbleth himself as a little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. But it is well said, *Then shalt thou have glory*, that thou mayest not begin to seek now what is kept for thee in the end. It may also be understood, even in this life, for daily does God come to His marriage feast, despising the proud; and often giving to the humble such great gifts of His Spirit, that the assembly of those who sit at meat, i. e. the faithful, glorify them in wonder. But in the general conclusion which is added, it is plainly declared that the preceding discourse of our Lord must be understood typically. For not every one who exalts himself before men is abased; nor is he who humbleth himself in their sight, exalted by them. But whoever exalteth himself because of his merits, the Lord shall bring low, and him who humbleth himself on account of his mercies, shall He exalt.

14:12–14

12. Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee.

13. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14. And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

Theophylact. The supper being composed of two parties, the invited and the inviter, and having already exhorted the invited to humility, He next rewards by His advice the inviter, guarding him against making a feast to gain the favour of men. Hence it is said, *Then said he also to him that bade*

him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 1, 3. in ep. Col.) Many are the sources from which friendships are made. Leaving out all unlawful ones, we shall speak only of those which are natural and moral; the natural are, for instance, between father and son, brother and brother, and such like; which He meant, saying, *Nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen*; the moral, when a man has become your guest or neighbour; and with reference to these He says, *nor thy neighbours.*

Bede. Brothers then, and friends, and the rich, are not forbidden, as though it were a crime to entertain one another, but this, like all the other necessary intercourse among men, is shewn to fail in meriting the reward of everlasting life; as it follows, *Lest perchance they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.* He says not, "and sin be committed against thee." And the like to this He speaks in another place, *And if ye do good to those who do good to you, what thank have ye?* (Luke 6:33.) There are however certain mutual feastings of brothers and neighbours, which not only incur a retribution in this life, but also condemnation hereafter. And these are celebrated by the general gathering together of all, or the hospitality in turn of each one of the company; and they meet together that they may perpetrate foul deeds, and through excess of wine be provoked to all kinds of lustful pleasure.

Chrysostom. Let us not then bestow kindness on others under the hope of return. For this is a cold motive, and hence it is that such a friendship soon vanishes. But if you invite the poor, God, who never forgets, will be your debtor, as it follows, *But when ye make a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 45. in Act.) For the humbler our brother is, so much the more does Christ come through him and visit us. For he who entertains a great man does it often from vainglory. And elsewhere, But very often interest is his object, that through such a one he may gain promotion. I could indeed mention many who for this pay court to the most distinguished of the nobles, that through their assistance they may obtain the greater favour from the prince. Let us not then ask those who can recompense us, as it follows, *And thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee.* And let us not be troubled when we receive no return of a kindness, but when we do; for if we have received it we shall receive nothing more, but if man does not repay us, God will. As it follows, *For thou shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*

Bede. And though all rise again, yet it is called the resurrection of the just, because in the resurrection they doubt not that they are blessed. Whoever then bids the poor to his feast shall receive a reward hereafter. But he who invites his friends, brothers, and the rich, has received his reward. But if he does this for God's sake after the example of the sons of Job, God, who Himself commanded all the duties of brotherly love, will reward him.

Chrysostom. But thou sayest, *the poor are unclean and filthy.* Wash him, and make him to sit with thee at table. If he has dirty garments, give him clean ones. Christ comes to thee through him, and dost thou stand trifling?

Gregory of Nyssa. Do not then let them lie as though they were nothing worth. Reflect who they are, and thou wilt discover their preciousness. They have put on the image of the Saviour. Heirs of future blessings, bearing the keys of the kingdom, able accusers and excusers, not speaking themselves, but examined by the judge.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 45. in Act.) It would become thee then to receive them above in the best chamber, but if thou shrinkest, at least admit Christ below, where are the menials and servants. Let the poor man be at least thy door keeper. For where there is alms, the devil durst not enter. And if thou sittest not down with them, at any rate send them the dishes from thy table.

Origen. But mystically, he who shuns vain-glory calls to a spiritual banquet the poor, that is, the ignorant, that he may enrich them; the weak, that is, those with offended consciences, that he may heal them; the lame, that is, those who have wandered from reason, that he may make their paths straight; the blind, that is, those who discern not the truth, that they may behold the true light. But it is said, *They cannot recompense thee*, i. e. they know not how to return an answer.

14:15–24

15. And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.

16. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:

17. And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.

18. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused.

19. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused.

20. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.

21. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.

22. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

23. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.

24. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Eusebius. Our Lord had just before taught us to prepare our feasts for those who cannot repay, seeing that we shall have our reward at the resurrection of the just. Some one then, supposing the resurrection of the just to be one and the same with the kingdom of God, commends the above-mentioned recompense; for it follows, *When one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.*

Cyril of Alexandria. That man was carnal, and a careless hearer of the things which Christ delivered, for he thought the reward of the saints was to be bodily.

Augustine. (Serm. 112.) Or because he sighed for something afar off, and that bread which he desired lay before him. For who is that Bread of the kingdom of God but He who says, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven?* (John 6:51.) Open not thy mouth, but thy heart.

Bede. But because some receive this bread by faith merely, as if by smelling, but its sweetness they loathe to really touch with their mouths, our Lord by the following parable condemns the dulness of those men to be unworthy of the heavenly banquet. For it follows, *But he said unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many.*

Cyril of Alexandria. This man represents God the Father just as images are formed to give the resemblance of power. For as often as God wishes to declare His avenging power, He is called by the names of bear, leopard, lion, and others of the same kind; but when He wishes to express mercy, by the name of man. The Maker of all things, therefore, and Father of Glory, or the Lord, prepared the great supper which was finished in Christ.

For in these latter times, and as it were the setting of our world, the Son of God has shone upon us, and enduring death for our sakes, has given us His own body to eat. Hence also the lamb was sacrificed in the evening according to the Mosaic law. Rightly then was the banquet which was prepared in Christ called a supper.

Gregory. (Hom. 36. in Evan.) Or he made a great supper, as having prepared for us the full enjoyment of eternal sweetness. He bade many, but few came, because sometimes they who themselves are subject to him by faith, by their lives oppose his eternal banquet. And this is generally the difference between the delights of the body and the soul, that fleshly delights when not possessed provoke a longing desire for them, but when possessed and devoured, the eater soon turns from satiety to loathing; spiritual delights, on the other hand, when not possessed are loathed, when possessed the more desired. But heavenly mercy recalls those despised delights to the eyes of our memory, and in order that we should drive away our disgust, bids us to the feast. Hence it follows, *And he sent his servant, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. That servant who was sent is Christ Himself, who being by nature God and the true Son of God, emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant. But He was sent at supper time. For not in the beginning did the Word take upon Him our nature, but in the last time; and he adds, *For all things are ready.* For the Father prepared in Christ the good things bestowed upon the world through Him, the removal of sins, the participation of the Holy Spirit, the glory of adoption. To these Christ bade men by the teaching of the Gospel.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or else, the Man is the Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus; He sent that they who were bidden might come, i. e. those who were called by the prophets whom He had sent; who in the former times invited to the supper of Christ, were often sent to the people of Israel, often bade them to come at supper time. They received the inviters, refused the supper. They received the prophets and killed Christ, and thus ignorantly prepared for us the supper. The supper being now ready, i. e. Christ being sacrificed, the Apostles were sent to those, to whom prophets had been sent before.

Gregory. By this servant then who is sent by the master of the family to bid to supper, the order of preachers is signified. But it is often the case that a powerful person has a despised servant, and when his Lord orders any thing through him, the servant speaking is not despised, because respect for the master who sends him is still kept up in the heart. Our Lord then offers what he ought to be asked for, not ask others to receive. He wishes to give what could scarcely be hoped for; yet all begin at once to make excuse, for it follows, *And they all began with one consent to make excuse.* Behold a rich man invites, and the poor hasten to come. We are invited to the banquet of God, and we make excuse.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Now there were three excuses, of which it is added, *The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it.* The bought piece of ground denotes government. Therefore pride is the first vice reproved. For the first man wished to rule, not willing to have a master.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) Or by the piece of ground is meant worldly substance. Therefore he goes out to see it who thinks only of outward things for the sake of his living.

Ambrose. Thus it is that the worn out soldier is appointed to serve degraded offices, as he who intent upon things below buys for himself earthly possessions, can not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord says, *Sell all that thou hast, and follow me.*

It follows, *And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them.*

Augustine. (Serm. 112.) The five yoke of oxen are taken to be the five senses of the flesh; in the eyes sight, in the ears hearing, in the nostrils smelling, in the mouth taste, in all the members touch. But the yoke is more easily apparent in the three first senses; two eyes, two ears, two nostrils. Here are three yoke. And in the mouth is the sense of taste which is found to be a kind of double, in that nothing is sensible to the taste, which is not touched both by the tongue and palate. The pleasure of the flesh which belongs to the touch is secretly doubled. It is both outward and inward. But they are called yoke of oxen, because through those senses of the flesh earthly things are pursued. For the oxen till the ground, but men at a distance from faith, given up to earthly things, refuse to believe in any thing, but what they arrive at by means of the five-fold sense of the body. "I believe nothing but what I see." If such were our thoughts, we should be hindered from the supper by those five yoke of oxen. But that you may understand that it is not the delight of the five senses which charms and conveys pleasure, but that a certain curiosity is denoted, he says not, *I have bought five yoke of oxen, and* go to feed them, but *go to prove them.*

Gregory. (in Hom. 36. in Ev.) By the bodily senses also because they cannot comprehend things within, but take cognizance only of what is without, curiosity is rightly represented, which while it seeks to shake off a life which is strange to it, not knowing its own secret life, desires to dwell upon things without. But we must observe, that the one who for his farm, and the other who to prove his five yoke of oxen, excuse themselves from the supper of their Inviter, mix up with their excuse the words of humility. For when they say, I pray thee, and then disdain to come, the word sounds of humility, but the action is pride. It follows, *And this said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) That is, the delight of the flesh which hinders many, I wish it were outward and not inward. For he who said, I have married a wife, taking pleasure in the delights of the flesh, excuses himself from the supper; let such a one take heed lest he die from inward hunger.

Basil. But he says, *I cannot come*, because that the human mind when it is degenerating to worldly pleasures, is feeble in attending to the things of God.

Gregory. (Hom. 36.) But although marriage is good, and appointed by Divine Providence for the propagation of children, some seek therein not fruitfulness of offspring, but the lust of pleasure. And so by means of a righteous thing may not unfitly an unrighteous thing be represented.

Ambrose. Or marriage is not blamed; but purity is held up to greater honour, since the unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy in body and spirit, but she that is married careth for the things of the world. (1 Cor. 7:34.)

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Now John when he said, *all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, (1 John 2:16.) began from the point where the Gospel ended. The lust of the flesh, *I have married a wife*; the lust of the eyes, *I have bought fire yoke of oxen*; the pride of life, *I have bought a farm*. But proceeding from a part to the whole, the five senses have been spoken of under the eyes alone, which hold the chief place among the five senses. Because though properly the sight belongs to the eyes, we are in the habit of ascribing the act of seeing to all the five senses.

Cyril of Alexandria. But whom can we suppose these to be who refused to come for the reason just mentioned, but the rulers of the Jews, whom throughout the sacred history we find to have been often reproved for these things?

Origen. Or else, they who have bought a piece of ground and reject or refuse the supper, are they who have taken other doctrines of divinity, but have despised the word which they possessed. But he who has bought five yoke of oxen is he who neglects his intellectual nature, and follows the things of sense, therefore he cannot comprehend a spiritual nature. But he who has married a wife is he who is joined to the flesh, a lover of pleasure rather than of God. (1 Tim. 3:4.)

Ambrose. Or let us suppose that three classes of men are excluded from partaking of that supper, Gentiles, Jews, Heretics. The Jews by their fleshly service impose upon themselves the yoke of the law, for the five yoke are the yoke of the Ten Commandments, of which it is said, *And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone*. (Deut. 4:13.) That is, the commands of the Decalogue. Or the five yoke are the five books of the old law. But heresy indeed, like Eve with a woman's obstinacy, tries the affection of faith. And the Apostle says that we must flee from covetousness, lest entangled in the customs of the Gentiles we be unable to come to the kingdom of Christ. (Eph. 5:3, Col. 3:5, Heb. 13:5, 1 Tim. 6:11.) Therefore both he who has bought a farm is a stranger to the kingdom, and he who has chosen the yoke of the law rather than the gift of grace, and he also who excuses himself because he has married a wife.

It follows, *And the servant returned, and told these things to his Lord.*

Augustine. (in Gen. ad lit. c. 19.) Not for the sake of knowing inferior beings does God require messengers, as though He gained aught from them, for He knows all things stedfastly and unchangeably. But he has messengers for oursakes and their own, because to be present with God, and stand before Him so as to consult Him about His subjects, and obey His heavenly commandments, is good for them in the order of their own nature.

Cyril of Alexandria. But with the rulers of the Jews who refused their call, as they themselves confessed, *Have any of the rulers believed on him?* (John 7:48.) the Master of the household was wroth, as with them that deserved His indignation and anger; whence it follows, *Then the master of the house being angry, &c.*

Pseudo-Basil. (app. Hom. in Ps. 37.) Not that the passion of anger belongs to the Divine substance, but an operation such as in us is caused by anger, is called the anger and indignation of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. Thus it was that the master of the house is said to have been enraged with the chiefs of the Jews, and in their stead were called men taken from out of the Jewish multitude, and of weak and impotent minds. For at Peter's preaching, first indeed three thousand, then five thousand believed, and afterwards much people; whence it follows, *He said unto his servant, Go out straightway into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.* (Acts 2:41, 44).

Ambrose. He invites the poor, the weak, and the blind, to shew that weakness of body shuts out no one from the kingdom of heaven, and that he is guilty of fewer sins who lacks the incitement to sin; or that the infirmities of sin are forgiven through the mercy of God. Therefore he sends to the streets, that from the broader ways they may come to the narrow way.

Because then the proud refuse to come, the *poor* (Greg. Hom. 36.) are chosen, since they are called weak and poor who are weak in their own judgment of themselves, for there are poor, and yet as it were strong, who though lying in poverty are proud; the *blind* are they who have no brightness of understanding; the *lame* are they who have walked not uprightly in their works. But since the faults of these are expressed in the weakness of their members, as those were sinners who when bidden refused to come, so also are these who are invited and come; but the proud sinners are rejected, the humble are chosen. God then chooses those whom the world despises, because for the most part the very act of contempt recals a man to himself. And men so much the sooner hear the voice of God, as they have nothing in this world to take pleasure in. When then the Lord calls certain from the streets and lanes to supper, He denotes that people who had learnt to observe in the city the constant practice of the law. But the multitude who believed of the people of Israel did not fill the places of the upper feast room. Hence it follows, *And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.* For already had great numbers of the Jews entered, but yet there was room in the kingdom for the abundance of the Gentiles to be received. Therefore it is added, *And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.* When He commanded His guests to be collected from the wayside and the hedges, He sought for a rural people, that is, the Gentiles.

Ambrose. Or, He sends to the highways and about the hedges, because they are fit for the kingdom of God, who, not absorbed in the desire for present goods, are hastening on to the future, set in a certain fixed path of good will. And who like a hedge which separates the cultivated ground from the uncultivated, and keeps off the incursion of the cattle, know how to distinguish good and evil, and to hold up the shield of faith against the temptations of spiritual wickedness.

Augustine. (Serm. 112.) The Gentiles came from the streets and lanes, the heretics come from the hedges. For they who make a hedge seek for a division; let them be drawn away from the hedges, plucked asunder from the thorns. But they are unwilling to be compelled. By our own will, say they, will we enter. *Compel them to enter*, He says. Let necessity be used from without, thence arises a will.

Gregory. (in Hom. 36.) They then who, broken down by the calamities of this world, return to the love of God, are compelled to enter. But very terrible is the sentence which comes next. *For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.* Let no one then despise the call, lest if when bidden he make excuse, when he wishes to enter he shall not be able.

14:25–27

25. And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

Gregory. (in Hom. 37. in Ev.) The mind is kindled, when it hears of heavenly rewards, and already desires to be there, where it hopes to enjoy them without ceasing; but great rewards cannot be reached except by great labours. Therefore it is said, *And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned to them, and said, &c.*

Theophylact. For because many of those that accompanied Him followed not with their whole heart, but lukewarmly, He shews what kind of a man his disciple ought to be.

Gregory. (in Hom. ut sup.) But it may be asked, how are we bid to hate our parents and our relations in the flesh, who are commanded to love even our enemies? But if we weigh the force of the command we are able to do both, by rightly distinguishing them so as both to love those who are united to us by the bond of the flesh, and whom we acknowledge our relations, and by hating and avoiding not to know those whom we find our enemies in the way of God. For he is as it were loved by hatred, who in his carnal wisdom, pouring into our ears his evil sayings, is not heard.

Ambrose. For if for thy sake the Lord renounces His own mother, saying, *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?* (Matt. 12:48, Mark 3:33.) why dost thou deserve to be preferred to thy Lord? But the Lord will have us neither be ignorant of nature, nor be her slaves, but so to submit to nature, that we reverence the Author of nature, and depart not from God out of love to our parents.

Gregory. (in Hom. ut sup.) Now to shew that this hatred towards relations proceeds not from inclination or passion, but from love, our Lord adds, *yea, and his own life also.* It is plain therefore that a man ought to hate his neighbour, by loving as himself him who hated him. For then we rightly hate our own soul when we indulge not its carnal desires, when we subdue its appetites, and wrestle against its pleasures. That which by being despised is brought to a better condition, is as it were loved by hatred.

Cyril of Alexandria. But life must not be renounced, which both in the body and the soul the blessed Paul also preserved, that yet living in the body he might preach Christ. But when it was necessary to despise life so that he might finish his course, he counts not his life dear unto him. (Acts 20:24.)

Gregory. (in Hom. ut sup.) How the hatred of life ought to be shewn He declares as follows; *Whosoever bears not his cross, &c.*

Chrysostom. He means not that we should place a beam of wood on our shoulders, but that we should ever have death before our eyes. As also Paul died daily and despised death. (1 Cor. 15:31.)

Basil. By bearing the cross also he announced the death of his Lord, saying, *The world is crucified to me, and I to the world*, (Gal. 6:14.) which we also anticipate at our very baptism, in which our old man is crucified, that the body of sin may be destroyed.

Gregory. (in Hom. 37. in Ev.) Or because the cross is so called from torturing. In two ways we bear our Lord's cross, either when by abstinence we afflict our bodies, or when through compassion of our neighbour we think all his necessities our own. But because some exercise abstinence of the flesh not for God's sake but for vain-glory, and shew compassion, not spiritually but carnally, it is rightly added, *And, cometh after me.* For to bear His cross and come after the Lord, is to use abstinence of the flesh, or compassion to our neighbour, from the desire of an eternal gain.

14:28–33

28. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29. Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30. Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?

32. Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that for-saketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Gregory. (37. in Ev.) Because He had been giving high and lofty precepts, immediately follows the comparison of building a tower, when it is said, *For which of you intending to build a tower does not first count &c.* For every thing that we do should be preceded by anxious consideration. If then we desire to build a tower of humility, we ought first to brace ourselves against the ills of this world.

Basil. (in Esai. 2.) Or the tower is a lofty watch-tower fitted for the guardianship of the city and the discovery of the enemy's approach. In like manner was our understanding given us to preserve the good, to guard against the evil. For the building up whereof the Lord bids us sit down and count our means if we have sufficient to finish.

Gregory of Nyssa. (lib. de Virg. 17.) For we must be ever pressing onward that we may reach the end of each difficult undertaking by successive increases of the commandments of God, and so to the completion of the divine work. For neither is one stone the whole fabric of the tower, nor does a single command lead to the perfection of the soul. But we must lay the foundation, and according to the Apostle, thereupon must be placed store of gold, silver, and precious stones. (1 Cor. 3:12.) Whence it is added, *Lest haply after he hath laid the foundation, &c.*

Theophylact. For we ought not to lay a foundation, i. e. begin to follow Christ, and not bring the work to an end, as those of whom St. John writes,

That many of his disciples went backward. (John 6:66.) Or by the foundation understand the word of teaching, as for instance concerning abstinence. There is need therefore of the above-mentioned foundation, that the building up of our works be established, a tower of strength from the face of the enemy. (Ps. 61:3.) Otherwise, man is laughed at by those who see him, men as well as devils.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) For when occupied in good works, unless we watch carefully against the evil spirits, we find those our mockers who are persuading us to evil. But another comparison is added proceeding from the less to the greater, in order that from the least things the greatest may be estimated. For it follows, *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consultelh whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?*

Cyril of Alexandria. *For we fight against spiritual wickedness in high places;* (Eph. 6:12.) but there presses upon us a multitude also of other enemies, fleshly lust, the law of sin raging in our members, and various passions, that is, a dreadful multitude of enemies.

Augustine. Or the ten thousand of him who is going to fight with the king who has twenty, signify the simplicity of the Christian about to contend with the subtlety of the devil.

Theophylact. The king is sin reigning in our mortal body; (Rom. 6:12.) but our understanding also was created king. If then he wishes to fight against sin, let him consider with his whole mind. For the devils are the satellites of sin, which being twenty thousand, seem to surpass in number our ten thousand, because that being spiritual compared to us who are corporeal, they are come to have much greater strength.

Augustine. (ut sup.) But as with respect to the unfinished tower, he alarms us by the reproaches of those who say, *The man began to build, and was not able to finish*, so with regard to the king with whom the battle was to be, he reproved even peace, adding, *Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace*; signifying that those also who forsake all they possess cannot endure from the devil the threats of even coming temptations, and make peace with him by consenting unto him to commit sin.

Gregory. (in Hom. ut sup.) Or else, in that awful trial we come not to the judgment a match for our king, for ten thousand are against twenty thousand, two against one. He comes with a double army against a single. For while we are scarcely prepared in deeds only, he sifts us at once both in thought and deed. While then he is yet afar off, who though still present in judgment, is not seen, let us send him an embassy, our tears, our works of mercy, the propitiatory victim. This is our message which appeases the coming king.

Augustine. Now to what these comparisons refer, He on the same occasion sufficiently explained, when he said, *So likewise whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.* The cost therefore of building the tower, and the strength of the ten thousand against the king who has twenty thousand, mean nothing else than that each one should forsake all that he hath. The foregoing introduction tallies then with the final conclusion. For in the saying that a man forsakes all that he hath, is contained also that he hates his father and mother, his wife and children, brothers and sisters, yea and his own wife also. For all these things are a man's own, which entangle him, and hinder him from obtaining not those particular possessions which will pass away with time, but those common blessings which will abide for ever.

Basil. But our Lord's intention in the above-mentioned example is not indeed to afford occasion or give liberty to any one to become His disciple or not, as indeed it is lawful not to begin a foundation, or not to treat of peace, but to shew the impossibility of pleasing God, amidst those things which distract the soul, and in which it is in danger of becoming an easy prey to the snares and wiles of the devil.

Bede. But there is a difference between renouncing all things and leaving all things. For it is the way of few perfect men to leave all things, that is, to cast behind them the cares of the world, but it is the part of all the faithful to renounce all things, that is, so to hold the things of the world as by them not to be held in the world.

14:34–35

34. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35. It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Bede. He had said above that the tower of virtue was not only to be begun, but also to be completed, and to this belongs the following, *Salt is good.* It is a good thing to season the secrets of the heart with the salt of spiritual wisdom, nay with the Apostles to become *the salt of the earth.* (Matt. 5:14.) For salt in substance consists of water and air, having a slight mixture of earth, but it dries up the fluent nature of corrupt bodies so as to preserve them from decay. Fitly then He compares His disciples to salt, inasmuch as they are regenerated by water and the Spirit; and as living altogether spiritually and not according to the flesh, they after the manner of salt change the corrupt life of men who live on the earth, and by their own virtuous lives delight and season their followers.

Theophylact. But not only those who are gifted with the grace of teachers, but private individuals also He requires to become like salt, useful to those around them. But if he who is to be useful to others becomes reprobate, he cannot be profited, as it follows, *But if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned?*

Bede. As if He says, "If a man who has once been enlightened by the seasoning of truth, falls back into apostacy, by what other teacher shall he be corrected, seeing that the sweetness of wisdom which he tasted he has cast away, alarmed by the troubles or allured by the attractions of the world; hence it follows, *It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, &c.* For salt when it has ceased to be fit for seasoning food and drying flesh, will be good for nothing. For neither is it useful to the land, which when it is east thereon is hindered from bearing, nor for the dunghill to benefit the dressing of the land. So he who after knowledge of the truth falls back, is neither able to bring forth the fruit of good works himself, nor to instruct others; but he must be cast out of doors, that is, must be separated from the unity of the Church.

Theophylact. But because His discourse was in parables and dark sayings, our Lord, in order to rouse His hearers that they might not receive indifferently what was said of the salt, adds, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear*, that is, as he has wisdom let him understand. For we must take the ears here as the perceptive power of the mind and capacity of understanding.

Bede. Let him hear also not by despising, but by doing what he has learnt.

CHAP. 15

15:1–7

1. Then drew near unto him all the Publicans and sinners for to hear him.

2. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.

3. And he spake this parable unto them, saying,

4. What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?

5. And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

6. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.

7. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

Ambrose. Thou hadst learnt by what went before not to be occupied by the business of this world, not to prefer transitory things to eternal. But because the frailty of man can not keep a firm step in so slippery a world, the good Physician has shewn thee a remedy even after falling; the merciful Judge has not denied the hope of pardon; hence it is added, *Then drew near unto him all the publicans.*

Gloss. (interlin.) That is, those who collect or farm the public taxes, and who make a business of following after worldly gain.

Theophylact. For this was His wont, for the sake whereof He had taken upon Him the flesh, to receive sinners as the physician those that are sick. But the Pharisees, the really guilty, returned murmurs for this act of mercy, as it follows, *And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, &c.*

Gregory. (in Hom. 34. in Evang.) From which we may gather, that true justice feels compassion, false justice scorn, although the just are wont rightly to repel sinners. But there is one act proceeding from the swelling of pride, another from the zeal for discipline. For the just, though without they spare not rebukes for the sake of discipline, within cherish sweetness from charity. In their own minds they set above themselves those whom they correct, whereby they keep both them under by discipline, and themselves by humility. But, on the contrary, they who from false justice are wont to pride themselves, despise all others, and never in mercy condescend to the weak; and thinking themselves not to be sinners, are so much the worse sinners. Of such were the Pharisees, who condemning our Lord because He received sinners, with parched hearts reviled the very fountain of mercy. But because they were so sick that they knew not of their sickness, to the end that they might know what they were, the heavenly Physician answers them with mild applications. For it follows, *And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you having an hundred sheep, and if he lose one of them, does not go after it, &c.* He gave a comparison which man might recognise in himself, though it referred to the Creator of men. For since a hundred is a perfect number, He Himself had a hundred sheep, seeing that He possessed the nature of the holy angels and men. Hence he adds, *Having an hundred sheep.*

Cyril of Alexandria. We may hence understand the extent of our Saviour's kingdom. For He says there are a hundred sheep, bringing to a perfect sum the number of rational creatures subject to Him. For the number hundred is perfect, being composed of ten decades. But out of these one has wandered, namely, the race of man which inhabits earth.

Ambrose. Rich then is that Shepherd of whom we all are a hundredth part; and hence it follows, *And if he lose one of them, does he not leave &c.*

Gregory. One sheep then perished when man by sinning left the pastures of life. But in the wilderness the ninety and nine remained, because the number of the rational creatures, that is to say of Angels and men who were formed to see God, was lessened when man perished; and hence it follows, *Does he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness*, because in truth he left the companies of the Angels in heaven. But man then forsook heaven when he sinned. And that the whole body of the sheep might be perfectly made up again in heaven, the lost man was sought for on earth; as it follows, *And go after that &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. But was He then angry with the rest, and moved by kindness only to one? By no means. For they are in safety, the right hand of the Most Mighty being their defence. It behoved Him rather to pity the perishing, that the remaining number might not seem imperfect. For the one being brought back, the hundred regains its own proper form.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. 2. qu. 32.) Or He spoke of those ninety and nine whom He left in the wilderness, signifying the proud, who bear solitude as it were in their mind, in that they wish to appear themselves alone, to whom unity is wanting for perfection. For when a man is torn from unity, it is by pride; since desiring to be his own master, he follows not that One which is God, but to that One God ordains all who are reconciled by repentance, which is obtained by humility.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Hom. de Mul. Pecc.) But when the shepherd had found the sheep, he did not punish it, he did not get it to the flock by driving it, but by placing it upon his shoulder, and carrying it gently, he united it to his flock. Hence it follows, *And when he hath found it, he layeth it upon his shoulders rejoicing.*

Gregory. (in Hom. 34.) He placed the sheep upon his shoulders, for taking man's nature upon Him he bore our sins. But having found the sheep, he returns home; for our Shepherd having restored man, returns to his heavenly kingdom. And hence it follows, *And coming he collects together his friends and neighbours, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.* (1 Pet. 2:24, Isai. 53.) By His friends and neighbours He means the companies of Angels, who are His friends because they are keeping His will in their own stedfastness; they are also His neighbours, because by their own constant waiting upon Him they enjoy the brightness of His sight.

Theophylact. The heavenly powers thus are called sheep, because every created nature as compared with God is as the beasts, but inasmuch as it is rational, they are called friends and neighbours.

Gregory. (in Hom. 34.) And we must observe that He says not, "Rejoice with the sheep that is found," but *with me*, because truly our life is His joy, and when we are brought home to heaven we fill up the festivity of His joy.

Ambrose. Now the angels, inasmuch as they are intelligent beings, do not unreasonably rejoice at the redemption of men, as it follows, *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.* Let this serve as an incentive to goodness, for a man to believe that his conversion will be pleasing to the assembled angels, whose favour he ought to court, or whose displeasure to fear.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But he allows there is more joy in heaven over the converted sinner, than over the just who remain stedfast; for the latter for the most part, not feeling themselves oppressed by the weight of their sins, stand indeed in the way of righteousness, but still do not anxiously sigh after the heavenly country, frequently being slow to perform good works, from their confidence in themselves that they have committed no grievous sins. But, on the other hand, sometimes those who remember certain iniquities that they have committed, being pricked to the heart, from their very grief grow inflamed towards the love of God; and because they consider they have wandered from God, make up for their former losses by the succeeding gains. Greater then is the joy in heaven, just as the leader in battle loves that soldier more who having turned from flight, bravely pursues the enemy, than him who never turned his back and never did a brave act. So the husbandman rather loves that land which after bearing thorns yields abundant fruit, than that which never had thorns, and never gave him a plentiful crop. But in the mean time we must be aware that there are very many just men in whose life there is so much joy, that no penitence of sinners however great can in any way be preferred to them. Whence we may gather what great joy it causes to God when the just man humbly mourns, if it produces joy in heaven when the unrighteous by his repentance condemns the evil that he has done.

15:8–10

8. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9. And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Chrysostom. (non occ.) By the preceding parable, in which the race of mankind was spoken of as a wandering sheep, we were shewn to be the creatures of the most high God, *who has made us, and not we ourselves, and we are the sheep of his pasture.* (Ps. 95:7.) But now is added a second parable, in which the race of man is compared to a piece of silver which was lost, by which he shews that we were made according to the royal likeness and image, that is to say, of the most high God. For the piece of silver is a coin having the impress of the king's image, as it is said, *Or what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one, &c.*

Gregory. (Hom. 34. in Ev.) He who is signified by the shepherd, is also by the woman. For it is God Himself, God and the wisdom of God, but the Lord has formed the nature of angels and men to know Him, and has created them after His likeness. The woman then had ten pieces of silver, because there are nine orders of angels, but that the number of the elect might be filled up, man the tenth was created.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. 2. qu. 33.) Or by the nine pieces of silver, as by the ninety and nine sheep, He represents those who trusting in themselves, prefer themselves to sinners returning to salvation. For there is one wanting to nine to make it ten, and to ninety-nine to make it a hundred. To one He assigns all who are reconciled by repentance.

Gregory. (ut sup.) And because there is an image impressed on the piece of silver, the woman lost the piece of silver when man (who was created after the image of God) by sinning departed from the likeness of his Creator. And this is what is added, *If she lose one piece, doth she not light a candle.* The woman lighted a candle because the wisdom of God appeared in man. For the candle is a light in an earthen vessel, but the light in an earthen vessel is the Godhead in the flesh. But the candle being lit, it follows, *And disturbs* (evertit) *the house.* Because verily no sooner had his Divinity shone forth through the flesh, than all our consciences were appalled. Which word of disturbance differs not from that which is read in other manuscripts, *sweeps*, (everrit) because the corrupt mind if it be not first overthrown through fear, is not cleansed from its habitual faults. But when the house is broken up, the piece of silver is found, for it follows, *And seeks diligently till she find it*; for truly when the conscience of man is disturbed, the likeness of the Creator is restored in man.

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. xlv. 26.) But the piece of silver being found, He makes the heavenly powers partakers of the joy whom He made the ministers of His dispensation, and so it follows, *And when she had found it, she calls together her friends and neighbours.*

Gregory. (in Hom. 23. ut sup.) For the heavenly powers are nigh unto Divine wisdom, inasmuch as they approach Him through the grace of continual vision.

Theophylact. Either they are friends as performing His will, but neighbours as being spiritual; or perhaps His friends are all the heavenly powers, but His neighbours those that come near to Him, as Thrones, Cherubims, and Seraphims.

Gregory of Nyssa. (lib. de Virgin. c. 12.) Or else; this I suppose is what our Lord sets before us in the search after the lost piece of silver, that no advantage attaches to us from the external virtues which He calls pieces of silver, although all of them be ours, as long as that one is lacking to the widowed soul, by which in truth it obtains the brightness of the Divine image. Wherefore He first bids us light a candle, that is to say, the divine word which brings hidden things to light, or perhaps the torch of repentance. But in his own house, that is, in himself and his own conscience, must a man seek for the lost piece of silver, that is, the royal image, which is not entirely defaced, but is hid under the dirt, which signifies its corruption of the flesh, and this being diligently wiped away, that is, washed out by a well-spent life, that which was sought for shines forth. Therefore ought she who has found it to rejoice, and to call to partake of her joy the neighbours, (that is, the companion virtues,) reason, desire, and anger, and whatever powers are observed round the soul, which she teaches to rejoice in the Lord. Then concluding the parable, He adds, *There is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner that repenteth.*

Gregory. (in Hom. 34. ut sup.) To work repentance is to mourn over past sins, and not to commit things to be mourned over. For he who weeps over some things so as yet to commit others, still knows not how to work repentance, or is a hypocrite; he must also reflect that by so doing he satisfies not his Creator, since he who had done what was forbidden, must cut off himself even from what is lawful, and so should blame himself in the least things who remembers that he has offended in the greatest.

15:11–16

11. And he said, A certain man had two sons:

12. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

16. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

Ambrose. St. Luke has given three parables successively; the sheep which was lost and found, the piece of silver which was lost and found, the son who was dead and came to life again, in order that invited by a threefold remedy, we might heal our wounds. Christ as the Shepherd bears thee on His own body, the Church as the woman seeks for thee, God as the Father receives thee, the first, pity, the second, intercession, the third, reconciliation.

Chrysostom. (Hom. de Patre et duobus Filiis.) There is also in the above-mentioned parable a rule of distinction with reference to the characters or dispositions of the sinners. The father receives his penitent son, exercising the freedom of his will, so as to know from whence he had fallen; and the shepherd seeks for the sheep that wanders and knows not how to return, and carries it on his shoulders, comparing to an irrational animal the foolish man, who, taken by another's guile, had wandered like a sheep. This parable is then set forth as follows; *But he said, A certain man had two sons.* There are some who say of these two sons, that the elder is the angels, but the younger, man, who departed on a long journey, when he fell from heaven and paradise to earth; and they adapt what follows with reference to the fall or condition of Adam. This interpretation seems indeed a lenient one, but I know not if it be true. For the younger son came to repentance of his own accord, remembering the past plenty of his father's house, but the Lord coming called the race of man to repentance, because he saw that to return of their own accord to whence they had fallen had never been in their thoughts; and the elder son is vexed at the return and safety of his brother, whereas the Lord says, *There is joy in heaven over one sinner repenting.*

Cyril of Alexandria. But some say that by the elder son is signified Israel according to the flesh, but by the other who left his father, the multitude of the Gentiles.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. qu. 33.) This man then having two sons is understood to be God having two nations, as if they were two roots of the human race; and the one composed of those who have remained in the worship of God, the other, of those who have ever deserted God to worship idols. From the very beginning then of the creation of mankind the elder son has reference to the worship of the one God, but the younger seeks that the part of the substance which fell to him should be given him by his father. Hence it follows, *And the younger of them said unto his father, Give me the portion of goods which falleth to me*; just as the soul delighted with its own power seeks that which belongs to it, to live, to understand, to remember, to excel in quickness of intellect, all which are the gifts of God, but it has received them in its own power by free will. Hence it follows, *And he divided unto them his substance.*

Theophylact. The substance of man is the capacity of reason which is accompanied by free will, and in like manner whatever God has given us shall be accounted for our substance, as the heaven, the earth, and universal nature, the Law and the Prophets.

Ambrose. Now you see that the Divine patrimony is given to them that seek; nor think it wrong in the father that he gave it to the younger, for no age is weak in the kingdom of God; faith is not weighed down by years. He at least counted himself sufficient who asked, And I wish he had not departed from his father, nor had had the hindrance of age. For it follows, *And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country.*

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) The younger son set out into a distant country, not locally departing from God, who is every where present, but in heart. For the sinner flees from God that he may stand afar off.

Augustine. (in Ps. 70.) Whoever wishes to be so like to God as to ascribe his strength to Him, (Ps. 59:9.) let him not depart from Him, but rather cleave to Him that he may preserve the likeness and image in which he was made. But if he perversely wishes to imitate God, that as God has no one by whom He is governed, so should he desire to exercise his own power as to live under no rules, what remains for him but that having lost all heat he should grow cold and senseless, and, departing from truth, vanish away.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 33.) But that which is said to have taken place not many days after, namely, that gathering all together he set out abroad into a far country, which is forgetfulness of God, signifies that not long after the institution of the human race, the soul of man chose of its free will to take with it a certain power of its nature, and to desert Him by whom it was created, trusting in its own strength, which it wastes the more rapidly as it has abandoned Him who gave it. Hence it follows, *And there wasted his substance in riotous living.* But he calls a riotous or prodigal life one that loves to spend and lavish itself with outward show, while exhausting itself within, since every one follows those things which pass on to something else, and forsakes Him who is closest to himself. As it follows, *And when he had spent all, there arose a great famine in that land.* The famine is the want of the word of truth.

It follows, *And he began to be in want.* Fitly did he begin to be in want who abandoned the treasures of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, and the unfathomableness of the heavenly riches. It follows, *And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) One of the citizens of that country was a certain prince of the air belonging to the army of the devil, whose fields signify the manner

of his power, concerning which it follows, *And he sent him into the field to feed swine*. The swine are the unclean spirits which are under him.

Bede. But to feed swine is to work those things in which the unclean spirits delight. It follows, *And he would have filled his belly with the husks which the swine did eat*. The husk is a sort of bean, empty within, soft outside, by which the body is not refreshed, but filled, so that it rather loads than nourishes.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) The husks then with which the swine were fed are the teaching of the world, which cries loudly of vanity; according to which in various prose and verse men repeat the praises of the idols, and fables belonging to the gods of the Gentiles, wherewith the devils are delighted. Hence when he would fain have filled himself, he wished to find therein something stable and upright which might relate to a happy life, and he could not; as it follows, *And no one gave to him.*

Cyril of Alexandria. But since the Jews are frequently reproved in holy Scripture for their many crimes, how agree with this people the words of the elder son, saying, *Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment*. (Jer. 2:5, Isa. 29:13.) This then is the meaning of the parable. The Pharisees and Scribes reproved Him because He received sinners; He set forth the parable in which He calls God the man who is the father of the two sons, (that is, the righteous and the sinners,) of whom the first degree is of the righteous who follow righteousness from the beginning, the second is of those men who are brought back by repentance to righteousness.

Basil. (Esai. 3, 23.) Besides, it belongs more to the character of the aged to have an old man's mind and gravity, than his hoar hairs, nor is he blamed who is young in age, but it is the young in habits who lives according to his passions.

Titus Bostrensis. The younger son then went away not yet matured in mind, and seeks from his father the part of his inheritance which fell to him, that in truth he might not serve of necessity. For we are rational animals endowed with free will.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Now the Scripture says, that the father divided equally between his two sons his substance, that is, the knowledge of good and evil, which is a true and everlasting possession to the soul that uses it well. The substance of reason which flows from God to men at their earliest birth, is given equally to all who come into this world, but after the intercourse that follows, each one is found to possess more or less of the substance; since one believing that which he has received to be from his father, preserves it as his patrimony, another abuses it as something that may be wasted away, by the liberty of his own possession. But the freedom of will is shewn in that the father neither kept back the son who wished to depart, nor forced the other to go that desired to remain, lest he should seem rather the author of the evil that followed. But the youngest son went afar off, not by changing his place, but by turning aside his heart. Hence it follows, *He took a journey into a far country.*

Ambrose. For what is more afar off than to depart from one's self, to be separate not by country but by habits. For he who severs himself from Christ is an exile from his country, and a citizen of this world. Fitly then does he waste his patrimony who departs from the Church.

Titus Bostrensis. Hence too was the prodigal denominated one who wasted his substance, that is, his right understanding, the teaching of chastity, the knowledge of the truth, the recollections of his father, the sense of creation.

Ambrose. Now there came to pass in that country a famine not of food but of good works and virtues, which is the more wretched fast. For he who departs from the word of God is hungry, because man does not live on bread alone, but on every word of God. (Matt. 4:4.) And he who departs from his treasures is in want. Therefore began he to be in want and to suffer hunger, because nothing satisfies a prodigal mind. He went away therefore, and attached himself to one of the citizens. For he who is attached, is in a snare. And that citizen seems to be a prince of the world. Lastly, he is sent to his farm which he bought who excused himself from the kingdom. (Luke 14:18.)

Bede. For to be sent to the farm is to be enthralled by the desire of worldly substance.

Ambrose. But he feeds those swine into whom the devil sought to enter, living in filth and pollution. (Matt. 8, Mark 2, Luke 8.)

Theophylact. There then he feeds, who surpassed others in vice, such as are panders, arch-robbers, arch-publicans, who teach others their abominable works.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Or he who is destitute of spiritual riches, as wisdom and understanding, is said to feed swine, that is, to nourish in his soul sordid and unclean thoughts, and he devours the material food of evil conversation, sweet indeed to him who lacks good works, because every work of carnal pleasure seems sweet to the depraved, while it inwardly unnerves and destroys the powers of the soul. Food of this kind, as being swines' food and hurtfully sweet, that is, the allurements of fleshly delights, the Scripture describes by the name of husks.

Ambrose. But he desired to fill his belly with the husks. For the sensual care for nothing else but to fill their bellies.

Theophylact. To whom no one gives a sufficiency of evil; for he is afar from God who lives on such things, and the devils do their best that a satiety of evil should never come.

Gloss. Or no one gave to him, because when the devil makes any one his own, he procures no further abundance for him, knowing him to be dead.

15:17–24

17. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18. I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19. And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

20. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

22. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:

24. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. in mul. peccat.) The younger son had despised his father when first he departed, and had wasted his father's money. But when in course of time he was broken down by hardship, having become a hired servant, and eating the same food with the swine, he returned, chastened, to his father's house. Hence it is said, *And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, but I perish with hunger.*

Ambrose. He rightly returns to himself, because he departed from himself. For he who returns to God restores himself to himself, and he who departs from Christ rejects himself from himself.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 33.) But he returned to himself, when from those things which without unprofitably entice and seduce, he brought back his mind to the inward recesses of his conscience.

Basil. There are three different distinct kinds of obedience. For either from fear of punishment we avoid evil and are servilely disposed; or looking to the gain of a reward we perform what is commanded, like to mercenaries; or we obey the law for the sake of good itself and our love to Him who gave it, and so savour of the mind of children.

Ambrose. For the son who has the pledge of the Holy Spirit in his heart seeks not the gain of an earthly reward, but preserves the right of an heir. These are also good husbandmen, to whom the vineyard is let out. (Matt. 21:41.) They abound not in husks, but bread.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But whence could he know this who had that great forgetfulness of God, which exists in all idolaters, unless it was the reflection of one returning to his right understanding, when the Gospel was preached. Already might such a soul see that many preach the truth, among whom there were some not led by the love of the truth itself, but the desire of getting worldly profit, who yet do not preach another Gospel like the heretics. Therefore are they rightly called mercenaries. For in the same house there are men who handle the same bread of the word, yet are not called to an eternal inheritance, but hire themselves for a temporal reward.

Chrysostom. (Hom. de Patre et duobus Filiis.) After that he had suffered in a foreign land all such things as the wicked deserve, constrained by the necessity of his misfortunes, that is, by hunger and want, he becomes sensible of what had been his ruin, who through fault of his own will had thrown himself from his father to strangers, from home to exile, from riches to want, from abundance and luxury to famine; and he significantly adds, *But I am here perishing with hunger.* As though he said; I am not a stranger, but the son of a good father, and the brother of an obedient son; I who am free and noble am become more wretched than the hired servants, sunk from the highest eminence of exalted rank, to the lowest degradation.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) But he returned not to his former happiness before that coming to himself he had experienced the presence of overpowering bitterness, and resolved the words of repentance, which are added, *I will arise.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) For he was lying down. *And I will go*, for he was a long way off. *To my father*, because he was under a master of swine. But the other words are those of one meditating repentance in confession of sin, but not yet working it. For he does not now speak to his father, but promises that he will speak when he shall come. You must understand then that this "coming to the father" must now be taken for being established in the Church by faith, where there may yet be a lawful and effectual confession of sins. He says then that he will say to his father, *Father.*

Ambrose. How merciful! He, though offended, disdains not to hear the name of Father. *I have sinned*; this is the first confession of sin to the Author of nature, the Ruler of mercy, the Judge of faith. But though God knows all things, He yet waits for the voice of thy confession. For with the mouth confession is made to salvation, since he lightens the load of error, who himself throweth the weight upon himself, and shuts out the hatred of accusation, who anticipates the accuser by confessing. In vain would you hide from Him whom nothing escapes; and you may safely discover what you know to be already known. Confess the rather that Christ may intercede for thee, the Church plead for thee, the people weep over thee: nor fear that thou wilt not obtain; thy Advocate promises pardon, thy Patron favour, thy Deliverer promises thee the reconciliation of thy Father's affection. But he adds, *Against heaven and before thee.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) When he says, *Before thee*, he shews that this father must be understood as God. For God alone beholds all things, from Whom neither the simple thoughts of the heart can be hidden.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Evan. l. ii. qu. 33.) But whether was this *sin against heaven*, the same as that which is *before thee*; so that he described by the name of heaven his father's supremacy. *I have sinned against heaven*, i. e. before the souls of the saints; but *before thee* in the very sanctuary of my conscience.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Or by heaven in this place may be understood Christ. For he who sins against heaven, which although above us is yet a visible element, is the same as he who sins against man, whom the Son of God took into Himself for our salvation.

Ambrose. Or by these words are signified the heavenly gifts of the Spirit impaired by the sin of the soul, or because from the bosom of his mother Jerusalem which is in heaven, he ought never to depart. But being cast down, he must by no means exalt himself. Hence he adds, *I am no more worthy to be called thy son.* And that he might be raised up by the merit of his humility, he adds, *Make me as one of thy hired servants.*

Bede. To the affection of a son, who doubts not that all things which are his father's are his, he by no means lays claim, but desires the condition of a hired servant, as now about to serve for a reward. But he admits that not even this could he deserve except by his father's approbation.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ubi sup.) Now this prodigal son, the Holy Spirit has engraved upon our hearts, that we may be instructed how we ought to deplore the sins of our soul.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 14. in Ep. Rom.) Who after that he said, *I will go to my father*, (which brought all good things,) tarried not, but took the whole journey; for it follows, *And he arose, and came to his father.* Let us do likewise, and not be wearied with the length of the way, for if we are willing, the return will become swift and easy, provided that we desert sin, which led us out from our father's house. But the father pitieth those who return. For it is added, *And when he was yet afar off.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) For before that he perceived God afar off, when he was yet piously seeking him, his father saw him. For the ungodly and proud,

God is well said not to see, as not having them before his eyes. For men are not commonly said to be before the eyes of any one except those who are beloved.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 10. in Ep. Rom. Greg. ubi sup.) Now the father perceiving his penitence did not wait to receive the words of his confession, but anticipates his supplication, *and had compassion on him*, as it is added, and was moved with pity.

Gregory of Nyssa. His meditating confession so won his father to him, that he went out to meet him, and kissed his neck; for it follows, *and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.* This signifies the yoke of reason imposed on the mouth of man by Evangelical tradition, which annulled the observance of the law.

Chrysostom. (Hom. de Patre et duob. Fil.) For what else means it that *he ran*, but that we through the hindrance of our sins cannot by our own virtue reach to God. But because God is able to come to the weak, *he fell on his neck.* The mouth is kissed, as that from which has proceeded the confession of the penitent, springing from the heart, which the father gladly received.

Ambrose. He runs then to meet thee, because He hears thee within meditating the secrets of thy heart, and when thou wert yet afar off, He runs lest any one should stop Him. He embraces also, (for in the running there is fore-knowledge, in the embrace mercy,) and as if by a certain impulse of paternal affection, falls upon thy neck, that he may raise up him that is cast down, and bring back again to heaven him that was loaded with sins and bent down to the earth. I had rather then be a son than a sheep. For the sheep is found by the shepherd, the son is honoured by the father.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or running he fell upon his neck; because the Father abandoned not His Only-Begotten Son, in whom He has ever been running after our distant wanderings. *For God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.* (2 Cor. 5:19.) But to fall upon his neck is to lower to his embrace His own Arm, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. But to be comforted by the word of God's grace unto the hope of pardon of our sins, this is to return after a long journey to obtain from a father the kiss of love. But already planted in the Church, he begins to confess his sins, nor says he all that he promised he would say. For it follows, *And his son said unto him, &c.* He wishes that to be done by grace, of which he confesses himself unworthy by any merits of his own. He does not add what he had said, when meditating beforehand, *Make me as one of thy hired servants.* For when he had not bread, he desired to be even a hired servant, which after the kiss of his father he now most nobly disdained.

Chrysostom. (non occ.) The father does not direct his words to his son, but speaks to his steward, for he who repents, prays indeed, but receives no answer in word, yet beholds mercy effectual in operation. For it follows, *But the father said unto his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him.*

Theophylact. By the servants (or angels) you may understand administering spirits, or priests who by baptism and the word of teaching clothe the soul with Christ Himself. *For as many of us as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ.* (Gal. 3:27.)

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 33.) Or the best robe is the dignity which Adam lost; the servants who bring it are the preachers of reconciliation.

Ambrose. Or the robe is the cloke of wisdom, by which the Apostle covers the nakedness of the body. But he received the best wisdom; for there is one wisdom which knew not the mystery. The ring is the seal of our unfeigned faith, and the impression of truth; concerning which it follows, *And put a ring on his hand.*

Bede. That is, his working, that by works faith may shine forth, and by faith his works be strengthened.

Augustine. (ut sup.) Or the ring on the hand is a pledge of the Holy Spirit, because of the participation of grace, which is well signified by the finger.

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Or he orders the ring to be given, which is the symbol of the seal of salvation, or rather the badge of betrothment, and pledge of the nuptials with which Christ espouses His Church. Since the soul that recovers is united by this ring of faith to Christ.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But the *shoes on the feet* are the preparation for preaching the Gospel, in order not to touch earthly things.

Chrysostom. (Hom. de Patre et duobus Filiis.) Or he bids them put shoes on his feet, either for the sake of covering the soles of his feet that he may walk firm along the slippery path of the world, or for the mortification of his members. For the course of our life is called in the Scriptures a foot, and a kind of mortification takes place in shoes; inasmuch as they are made of the skins of dead animals. He adds also, that the fatted calf must be killed for the celebration of the feast. For it follows, *And bring the fatted calf*, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom he calls a calf, because of the sacrifice of a body without spot; but he called it fatted, because it is rich and costly, inasmuch as it is sufficient for the salvation of the whole world. But the Father did not Himself sacrifice the calf, but gave it to be sacrificed to others. For the Father permitting, the Son consenting thereto by men was crucified.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Or, the fatted calf is our Lord Himself in the flesh loaded with insults. But in that the Father commands them to bring it, what else is this but that they preach Him, and by declaring Him cause to revive, yet unconsumed by hunger, the bowels of the hungry son? He also bids them kill Him, alluding to His death. For He is then killed to each man who believes Him slain. It follows, *And let us eat.*

Ambrose. Rightly the flesh of the calf, because it is the priestly victim which was offered for sin. But he introduces him feasting, when he says, *Be merry*; to shew that the food of the Father is our salvation; the joy of the Father the redemption of our sins.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) For the father himself rejoices in the return of his son, and feasts on the calf, because the Creator, rejoicing in the acquisition of a believing people, feasts on the fruit of His mercy by the sacrifice of His Son. Hence it follows, *For this my son was dead, and is alive again.*

Ambrose. He is dead who was. Therefore the Gentiles are not, the Christian is. Here however might be understood one individual of the human race; Adam was, and in him we all were. Adam perished, and in him we all have perished. Man then is restored in that Man who has died. It might also seem to be spoken of one working repentance, because he dies not who has not at one time lived. And the Gentiles indeed when they have believed are made alive again by grace. But he who has fallen recovers by repentance.

Theophylact. As then with respect to the condition of his sins, he had been despaired of; so in regard to human nature, which is changeable and can be turned from vice to virtue, he is said to be lost. For it is less to be lost than to die. But every one who is recalled and turned from sin, partaking of the fatted calf, becomes an occasion of joy to his father and his servants, that is, the angels and priests. Hence it follows, *And they all began to be merry.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Those banquets are now celebrated, the Church being enlarged and extended throughout the whole world. For that calf in our Lord's body and blood is both offered up to the Father, and feeds the whole house.

25. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard musick and dancing.

26. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

28. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

29. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30. But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

32. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

Bede. While the Scribes and Pharisees were murmuring about His receiving sinners, our Saviour put three parables to them successively. In the two first He hints at the joy He has with the angels in the salvation of penitents. But in the third He not only declares His own joy and that of His angels, but He also blames the murmurings of those who were envious. For He says, *Now his elder son was in the field.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) The elder son is the people of Israel, not indeed gone into a distant country, yet not in the house, but in the field, that is, in the paternal wealth of the Law and the Prophets, choosing to work earthly things. But coming from the field he began to draw nigh to the house, that is, the labour of his servile works being condemned by the same Scriptures, he was looking upon the liberty of the Church. Whence it follows; *And as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing*; that is, men filled with the Holy Spirit, with harmonious voices preaching the Gospel. It follows, *And he called one of the servants, &c.* that is, he takes one of the prophets to read, and as he searches in it, asks in a manner, why are those feasts celebrated in the Church at which he finds himself present? His Father's servant, the prophet, answers him. For it follows; *And he said unto him, Thy brother is come, &c.* As if he should say, Thy brother was in the farthest parts of the earth, but hence the greater rejoicing of those *who sing a new song*, because *His praise is from the end of the earth*; (Is. 42:10.) and for his sake who was afar off, was slain the Man who knows how to bear our infirmities, for they who have not been told of Him have seen Him. (See Isa. 53:4; 52:15.)

Ambrose. But the younger son, that is the Gentile people, is envied by Israel as the elder brother, the privilege of his father's blessing. Which the Jews did because Christ sat down to meat with the Gentiles, as it follows; *And he was angry, and would not go in, &c.*

Augustine. He is angry even also now, and still is unwilling to enter. When then the fulness of the Gentiles shall have come in, His father will go out at the fit time that all Israel also may be saved, as it follows, *therefore came his father out and entreated him.* (Rom. 11:26.) For there shall he at some time an open calling of the Jews to the salvation of the Gospel. Which manifestation of calling he calls the going out of the father to entreat the elder son. Next the answer of the elder son involves two questions; for it follows, *And he answering said to his father, Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.* With respect to the commandment not transgressed, it at once occurs, that it was not spoken of every command, but of that most essential one, that is, that he was seen to worship no other God but one, the Creator of all. Nor is that son to be understood to represent all Israelites, but those who have never turned from God to idols. For although he might desire earthly things, yet sought he them from God alone, though in common with sinners. Hence it is said, *I was as a beast before thee, and I am always with thee.* (Ps. 7, 22.) But who is the kid which he never received to make merry upon? for it follows, *Thou never gavest me a kid, &c.* Under the name of a kid the sinner may be signified.

Ambrose. The Jew requires a kid, the Christian a lamb, and therefore is Barabbas released to them, to us a lamb is sacrificed. Which thing also is seen in the kid, because the Jews have lost the ancient rite of sacrifice. Or they who seek for a kid wait for Antichrist.

Augustine. But I do not see the object of this interpretation, for it is very absurd for him to whom it is afterwards said, *Thou art ever with me*, to have wished for this from his father, i. e. to believe in Antichrist. Nor altogether can we rightly understand any of the Jews who are to believe in Antichrist to be that son.

And how could he feast upon that kid which is Antichrist who did not believe in him? But if to feast upon the slain kid, is the same as to rejoice at the destruction of Antichrist, how does the son whom the father did not entertain say that this was never given him, seeing that all the sons will rejoice at his destruction? His complaint then is, that the Lord Himself was denied him to feast upon, because he deems Him a sinner. For since He is a kid to that nation which regards Him as a violater and profaner of the Sabbath, it was not meet that they should be made merry at his banquet. But his words *with my friends* are understood according to the relation of the chiefs with the people, or of the people of Jerusalem with the other nations of Judæa.

Jerome. (in Ep. 21. ad Damasum.) Or he says, *Thou never gavest me a kid*, that is, no blood of prophet or priest has delivered us from the Roman power.

Ambrose. Now the shameless son is like to the Pharisee justifying himself. Because he had kept the law in the letter, he wickedly accused his brother for having wasted his father's substance with harlots. For it follows, *But as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured thy living, &c.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) The harlots are the superstitions of the Gentiles, with whom he wastes his substance, who having left the true marriage of the true God, goes a whoring: after evil spirits from foul desire.

Jerome. (ubi sup.) Now in that which he says, *Thou hast killed for him the fatted calf*, he confesses that Christ has come, but envy has no wish to be saved.

Augustine. But the father does not rebuke him as a liar, but commending his stedfastness with him invites him to the perfection of a better and happier rejoicing. Hence it follows, *But he said to him, Son, thou art ever with me.*

Jerome. (ubi sup.) Or after having said, "This is boasting, not truth," the father does not agree with him, but restrains him in another way, saying, *Thou art*

with me, by the law under which thou art bound; not as though he had not sinned, but because God continually drew him back by chastening. Nor is it wonderful that he lies to his father who hates his brother.

Ambrose. But the kind father was still desirous to save him, saying, *Thou art ever with me*, either as a Jew in the law, or as the righteous man in communion with Him.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But what means he that he adds, *And all that I have is thine*, as if they were not his brother's also? But it is thus that all things are looked at by perfect and immortal children, that each is the possession of all, and all of each. For as desire obtains nothing without want, so charity nothing with want. But how all things? Must then God be supposed to have subjected the angels also to the possession of such a son? If you so take possession as that the possessor of a thing is its lord, certainly not all things. For we shall not be the lords, but the companions of angels. Again, if possession is thus understood, how do we rightly say that our souls possess truth? I see no reason why we may not truly and properly say so. For we do not so speak as to call our souls the mistresses of truth. Or if by the term possession we are hindered from this sense, let that also be set aside. For the father says not, "Thou possessest all things," but *All that I have is thine*, still not as if thou wert its lord. For that which is our property may be either food for our families, or ornament, or something of the kind. And surely, when he can rightly call his father his own, I do not see why he may not also rightly call his own what belongs to his father, only in different ways. For when we shall have obtained that blessedness, the higher things will be ours to look upon, equal things ours to have fellowship with, the lower things ours to rule. Let then the elder brother join most safely in the rejoicing.

Ambrose. For if he ceases to envy, he will feel all things to be his, either as the Jew possessing the sacraments of the Old Testament, or as a baptized person those of the New also.

Theophylact. Or to take the whole differently; the character of the son who seems to complain is put for all those who are offended at the sudden advances and salvation of the perfect, as David introduces one who took offence at the peace of sinners.

Titus Bostrensis. The elder son then as a husbandman was engaged in husbandry, digging not the land, but the field of the soul, and planting trees of salvation, that is to say, the virtues.

Theophylact. Or he was in the field, that is, in the world, pampering his own flesh, that he might be filled with bread, and sowing in tears that he might reap in joy, but when he found what was being done, he was unwilling to enter into the common joy.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 64. in Matt.) But it is asked, whether one who grieves at the prosperity of others is affected by the passion of envy. We must answer, that no Saint grieves at such things; but rather looks upon the good things of others as his own. Now we must not take every thing contained in the parable literally, but bringing out the meaning which the author had in view, search for nothing farther. This parable then was written to the end that sinners should not despair of returning, knowing that they shall obtain great things. Therefore he introduces others so troubled at these good things as to be consumed with envy, but those who return, treated with such great honour as to become themselves an object of envy to others.

Theophylact. Or by this parable our Lord reproves the will of the Pharisees, whom according to the argument he terms *just*, as if to say, Let it be that you are truly just, having transgressed none of the commandments, must we then for this reason refuse to admit those who turn away from their iniquities?

Jerome. (ubi sup.) Or, in another way, all justice in comparison of the justice of God is injustice. Therefore Paul says, *Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* (Rom. 7:24.) and hence were the Apostles moved with anger at the request of the sons of Zebedee. (Matt. 20:24.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Which we also ourselves sometimes feel; for some live a most excellent and perfect life, another off time even in his old age is converted to God, or perhaps when just about to close his last day, through God's mercy washes away his guilt. But this mercy some men reject from restless timidity of mind, not counting upon the will of our Saviour, who rejoices in the salvation of those who are perishing.

Theophylact. The son then says to the father, For nothing I left a life of sorrow, ever harassed by sinners who were my enemies, and never hast thou for my sake ordered a kid to be slain, (that is, a sinner who persecuted me,) that I might enjoy myself for a little. Such a kid was Ahab to Elijah, who said, *Lord, they have killed thy prophets*. (1 Kings 19:14.)

Ambrose. Or else, This brother is described so as to be said to come from the farm, that is, engaged in worldly occupations, so ignorant of the things of the Spirit of God, as at last to complain that a kid had never been slain for him. For not for envy, but for the pardon of the world, was the Lamb sacrificed. The envious seeks a kid, the innocent a lamb, to be sacrificed for it. Therefore also is he called the elder, because a man soon grows old through envy. Therefore too he stands without, because his malice excludes him; therefore could he not hear the dancing and music, that is, not the wanton fascinations of the stage, but the harmonious song of a people, resounding with the sweet pleasantness of joy for a sinner saved. For they who seem to themselves righteous are angry when pardon is granted to one confessing his sins. Who art thou that speakest against thy Lord, that he should not, for example, forgive a fault, when thou pardonest whom thou wilt? But we ought to favour forgiving sin after repentance, lest while grudging pardon to another, we ourselves obtain it not from our Lord. Let us not envy those who return from a distant country, seeing that we ourselves also were afar off.

CHAP. 16

16:1–7

1. And he said unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

3. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

4. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6. And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

Bede. Having rebuked in three parables those who murmured because He received penitents, our Saviour shortly after subjoins a fourth and a fifth on almsgiving and frugality, because it is also the fittest order in preaching that almsgiving should be added after repentance. Hence it follows, *And he said unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man.*

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (Hom. de Divite.) There is a certain erroneous opinion inherent in mankind, which increases evil and lessens good. It is the feeling that all the good things we possess in the course of our life we possess as lords over them, and accordingly we seize them as our especial goods. But it is quite the contrary. For we are placed in this life not as lords in our own house, but as guests and strangers, led whither we would not, and at a time we think not of. He who is now rich, suddenly becomes a beggar. Therefore whoever thou art, know thyself to be a dispenser of the things of others, and that the privileges granted thee are for a brief and passing use. Cast away then from thy soul the pride of power, and put on the humility and modesty of a steward.

Bede. (ex Hieron.) The bailiff is the manager of the farm, therefore he takes his name from the farm. But the steward, or director of the household, (villicus œconomus) is the overseer of money as well as fruits, and of every thing his master possesses.

Ambrose. From this we learn then, that we are not ourselves the masters, but rather the stewards of the property of others.

Theophylact. Next, that when we exercise not the management of our wealth according to our Lord's pleasure, but abuse our trust to our own pleasures, we are guilty stewards. Hence it follows, *And he was accused to him.*

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Meanwhile he is taken and thrust out of his stewardship; for it follows, *And he called him, and said unto him, What is this that I hear of thee? give an account of thy stewardship, for thou canst be no longer steward.* Day after day by the events which take place our Lord cries aloud to us the same thing, shewing us a man at midday rejoicing in health, before the evening cold and lifeless; another expiring in the midst of a meal. And in various ways we go out from our stewardship; but the faithful steward, who has confidence concerning his management, desires with Paul *to depart and be with Christ.* (Phil. 1:23.) But he whose wishes are on earth is troubled at his departing. Hence it is added of this steward, *Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do, for my Lord taketh away from me the stewardship? I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed.* Weakness in action is the fault of a slothful life. For no one would shrink who had been accustomed to apply himself to labour. But if we take the parable allegorically, after our departure hence there is no more time for working; the present life contains the practice of what is commanded, the future, consolation. If thou hast done nothing here, in vain then art thou careful for the future, nor wilt thou gain any thing by begging. The foolish virgins are an instance of this, who unwisely begged of the wise, but returned empty. (Matt 25:8.) For every one puts on his daily life as his inner garment; it is not possible for him to put it off or exchange it with another. But the wicked steward aptly contrived the remission of debts, to provide for himself an escape from his misfortunes among his fellow-servants; for it follows, *I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.* For as often as a man, perceiving his end approaching, lightens by a kind deed the load of his sins, (either by forgiving a debtor his debts, or by giving abundance to the poor,) dispensing those things which are his Lord's, he conciliates to himself many friends, who will afford him before the judge a real testimony, not by words, but by the demonstration of good works, nay moreover will provide for him by their testimony a resting-place of consolation. But nothing is our own, all things are in the power of God. Hence it follows, *So he called every one of his Lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my Lord? And he said, A hundred casks of oil.*

Bede. A cadus in Greek is a vessel containing three urns. It follows, *And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty*, forgiving him the half. It follows, *Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat.* A corus is made up of thirty bushels. *And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore*, forgiving him a fifth part. It may be then simply taken as follows: whosoever relieves the want of a poor man, either by supplying half or a fifth part, will be blessed with the reward of his mercy.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. l. ii. qu. 34.) Or because out of the hundred measures of oil, he caused fifty to be written down by the debtors, and of the hundred measures of wheat, fourscore, the meaning thereof is this, that those things which every Jew performs toward the Priests and Levites should be the more abundant in the Church of Christ, that whereas they give a tenth, Christians should give a half, as Zaccheus gave of his goods, (Luke 19:8.) or at least by giving two tenths, that is, a fifth, exceed the payments of the Jews.

16:8–13

8. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.

9. And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

10. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13. No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) The steward whom his Lord cast out of his stewardship is nevertheless commended because he provided himself against the future. As it follows, *And the Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely*; we ought not however to take the whole for our imitation. For we should never act deceitfully against our Lord in order that from the fraud itself we may give alms.

Origen. (in Prov. 1:1.) But because the Gentiles say that wisdom is a virtue, and define it to be the experience of what is good, evil, and indifferent, or the knowledge of what is and what is not to be done, we must consider whether this word signifies many things, or one. For it is said that God by wisdom prepared the heavens. (Prov. 3:19.) Now it is plain that wisdom is good, because the Lord by wisdom prepared the heavens. It is said also in Genesis, according to the LXX, that the serpent was the wisest animal, wherein He makes wisdom not a virtue, but evil-minded cunning. And it is in this sense that the Lord commended the steward that he had done wisely, that is, cunningly and evilly. And perhaps the word *commended* was spoken not in the sense of real commendation, but in a lower sense; as when we speak of a man being commended in slight and indifferent matters, and in a certain measure clashings and sharpness of wit are admired, by which the power of the mind is drawn out.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) On the other hand this parable is spoken, that we should understand that if the steward who acted deceitfully, could be praised by his lord, how much more they please God who do their works according to His commandment.

Origen. The children of this world also are not called wiser but more prudent than the children of light, and this not absolutely and simply, but in their generation. For it follows, *For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light, &c.*

Bede. The children of light and the children of this world are spoken of in the same manner as the children of the kingdom, and the children of hell. For whatever works a man does, he is also termed their son.

Theophylact. By the children of this world then He means those who mind the good things which are on the earth; by the children of light, those who beholding the divine love, employ themselves with spiritual treasures. But it is found indeed in the management of human affairs, that we prudently order our own things, and busily set ourselves to work, in order that when we depart we may have a refuge for our life; but when we ought to direct the things of God, we take no forethought for what shall be our lot hereafter.

Gregory. (18. Mor. cap. 18.) In order then that after death they may find something in their own hand, let men before death place their riches in the hands of the poor. Hence it follows, *And I say to you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, &c.*

Augustine. (Serm. 113.) That which the Hebrews call *mammon*, in Latin is "riches." As if He said, "Make to yourselves friends of the riches of unrighteousness." Now some misunderstanding this, seize upon the things of others, and so give something to the poor, and think that they are doing what is commanded. That interpretation must be corrected into, Give alms of your righteous labours. (Prov. 3:9. LXX.) For you will not corrupt Christ your Judge. If from the plunder of a poor man, you were to give any thing to the judge that he might decide for you, and that judge should decide for you, such is the force of justice, that you would be ill pleased in yourself. Do not then make to yourself such a God. God is the fountain of Justice, give not your alms then from interest and usury. I speak to the faithful, to whom we dispense the body of Christ. But if you have such money, it is of evil that you have it. Be no longer doers of evil. Zaccheus said, *Half my goods I give to the poor.* (Luke 19:8.) See how he runs who runs to make friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; and not to be held guilty from any quarter, he says, *I If hare taken any thing from any one, I restore fourfold.* According to another interpretation, the mammon of unrighteousness are all the riches of the world, whenever they come. For if you seek the true riches, there are some in which Job when naked abounded, when he had his heart full towards God. The others are called riches from unrighteousness; because they are not true riches, for they are full of poverty, and ever liable to chances. For if they were true riches, they would give you security.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 34.) Or the riches of unrighteousness are so called, because they are not riches except to the unrighteous, and such as rest in their hopes and the fulness of their happiness. But when these things are possessed by the righteous, they have indeed so much money, but no riches are theirs but heavenly and spiritual.

Ambrose. Or he spoke of the unrighteous Mammon, because by the various enticements of riches covetousness corrupts our hearts, that we may be willing to obey riches.

Basil. (Hom. de Avar.) Or if thou hast succeeded to a patrimony, thou receivest what has been amassed by the unrighteous; for in a number of predecessors some one must needs be found who has unjustly usurped the property of others. But suppose that thy father has not been guilty of exaction, whence hast thou thy money? If indeed thou answerest, "From myself;" thou art ignorant of God, not having the knowledge of thy Creator; but if, "From God," tell me the reason for which thou receivedst it. *Is not the earth and the fulness thereof the Lord's?* (Ps. 24:1.) If then whatever is ours belongs to our common Lord, so will it also belong to our fellow-servant.

Theophylact. Those then are called the riches of unrighteousness which the Lord has given for the necessities of our brethren and fellow-servants, but we spend upon ourselves. It became us then, from the beginning, to give all things to the poor, but because we have become the stewards of unrighteousness, wickedly retaining what was appointed for the aid of others, we must not surely remain in this cruelty, but distribute to the poor, that we may be received by them into everlasting habitations. For it follows, *That, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

Gregory. (21. Mor. cap. 14.) But if through their friendship we obtain everlasting habitations, we ought to calculate that when we give we rather offer presents to patrons, than bestow benefits upon the needy.

Augustine. (Serm. 113.) For who are they that shall have everlasting habitations but the saints of God? and who are they that are to be received by them into everlasting habitations but they who administer to their want, and whatsoever they have need of, gladly supply. They are those little ones of Christ, who have forsaken all that belonged to them and followed Him; and whatsoever they had have given to the poor, that they might serve God without earthly shackles, and freeing their shoulders from the burdens of the world, might raise them aloft as with wings.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 34.) We must not then understand those by whom we wish to be received into everlasting habitations to be as it were debtors of God; seeing that the just and holy are signified in this place, who cause those to enter in, who administered to their necessity of their own worldly goods.

Ambrose. Or else, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that by giving to the poor we may purchase the favour of angels and all the saints.

Chrysostom. Mark also that He said not, "that they may receive you into their own habitations." For it is not they who receive you. Therefore when He said, *Make to yourselves friends*, he added, *of the mammon of unrighteousness*, to shew, that their friendship will not alone protect us unless good works accompany us, unless we righteously cast away all riches unrighteously amassed. The most skilful then of all arts is that of almsgiving. For it builds not for us houses of mud, but lays up in store an everlasting life. Now in each of the arts one needs the support of another; but when we ought to shew mercy, we need nothing else but the will alone.

Cyril of Alexandria. Thus then Christ taught those who abound in riches, earnestly to love the friendship of the poor, and to have treasure in heaven. But He knew the sloth of the human mind, how that they who court riches bestow no work of charity upon the needy. That to such men there results no profit of spiritual gifts, He shews by obvious examples, adding, *He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.* Now our Lord opens to us the eye of the heart, explaining what He had said, adding, *If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?* That which is least then is the mammon of unrighteousness, that is, earthly riches, which seem nothing to those that are heavenly wise. I think then that a man is faithful in a little, when he imparts aid to those who are bowed down with sorrow. If then we have been unfaithful in a little thing, how shall we obtain from hence the true riches, that is, the fruitful gift of Divine grace, impressing the image of God on the human soul? But that our Lord's words incline to this meaning is plain from the following; for He says, *And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?*

Ambrose. Riches are foreign to us, because they are something beyond nature, they are not born with us, and they do not pass away with us. But Christ is ours, because He is the life of man. Lastly, He came unto His own.

Theophylact. Thus then hitherto He has taught us how faithfully we ought to dispose of our wealth. But because the management of our wealth according to God is no otherwise obtained than by the indifference of a mind unaffected towards riches, He adds, *No man can serve two masters.*

Ambrose. Not because the Lord is two, but one. For although there are who serve mammon, yet he knoweth no rights of lordship; but has himself placed upon himself a yoke of servitude. There is one Lord, because there is one God. Hence it is evident, that the power of the Father and the Son is one: and He assigns a reason, thus saying, *For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.*

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. lib. ii. q. 36.) But these things were not spoken indifferently or at random. For no one when asked whether he loves the devil, answers that he loves him, but rather that he hates him; but all generally proclaim that they love God. *Therefore either he will hate the one*, (that is, the devil,) *and love the other*, (that is, God;) *or will hold to the one*, (that is, the devil, when he pursues as it were temporal wants,) *and will despise the other*, (that is, God,) as when men frequently neglect His threats for their desires, who because of His goodness flatter themselves that they will have impunity.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the conclusion of the whole discourse is what follows, *Ye cannot serve God and mammon.* Let us then transfer all our devotions to the one, forsaking riches.

Bede. (ex Hier.) Let then the covetous hear this, that we can not at the same time serve Christ and riches; and yet He said not, "Who has riches," but, who serves riches; for he who is the servant of riches, watches them as a servant; but he who has shaken off the yoke of servitude, dispenses them as a master; but he who serves mammon, verily serves him who is set over those earthly things as the reward of his iniquity, and is called *the prince of this world.* (John 12:31, 2 Cor. 4:4.)

16:14–18

14. And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

15. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

16. The Law and the Prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.

17. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail.

18. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Bede. Christ had told the Pharisees not to boast of their own righteousness, but to receive penitent sinners, and to redeem their sins by almsgiving. But they derided the Preacher of mercy, humility, and frugality; as it is said, *And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard these things; and derided him*: it may be for two reasons, either because He commanded what was not sufficiently profitable, or cast blame upon their past superfluous actions.

Theophylact. But the Lord detecting in them a hidden malice, proves that they make a pretence of righteousness. Therefore it is added, *And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men.*

Bede. They justify themselves before men who despise sinners as in a weak and hopeless condition, but fancy themselves to be perfect and not to need

the remedy of almsgiving; but how justly the depth of deadly pride is to be condemned, He sees who will enlighten the hidden places of darkness. Hence it follows, *But God knoweth your hearts.*

Theophylact. And therefore ye are an abomination to Him because of your arrogance, and love of seeking after the praise of men; as He adds, *For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*

Bede. Now the Pharisees derided our Saviour disputing against covetousness, as if He taught things contrary to the Law and the Prophets, in which many very rich men are said to have pleased God; but Moses also himself promised that the people whom he ruled, if they followed the Law, should abound in all earthly goods. (Deut. 28:11.) These the Lord answers by shewing that between the Law and the Gospel, as in these promises so also in the commands, there is not the slightest difference. Hence He adds, *The Law and the Prophets were until John.*

Ambrose. Not that the Law failed, but that the preaching of the Gospel began; for that which is inferior seems to be completed when a better succeeds.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 37. in Matt. Pseudo-Chrys. Hom. 19. op. imp.) He hereby disposes them readily to believe on Him, because if as far as John's time all things were complete, I am He who am come. For the Prophets had not ceased unless I had come; but you will say, "how" were the Prophets until John, since there have been many more Prophets in the New than the Old Testament. But He spoke of those prophets who foretold Christ's coming.

Eusebius. Now the ancient prophets knew the preaching of the kingdom of heaven, but none of them had expressly announced it to the Jewish people, because the Jews having a childish understanding were unequal to the preaching of what is infinite. But John first openly preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, as well as also the remission of sins by the laver of regeneration. Hence it follows, *Since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached, and every one presseth into it.*

Ambrose. For the Law delivered many things according to nature, as being more indulgent to our natural desires, that it might call us to the pursuit of righteousness. Christ breaks through nature as cutting off even our natural pleasures. But therefore we keep under nature, that it should not sink us down to earthly things, but raise us to heavenly.

Eusebius. A great struggle befals men in their ascent to heaven. For that men clothed with mortal flesh should be able to subdue pleasure and every unlawful appetite, desiring to imitate the life of angels, must be compassed with violence. But who that looking upon those who labour earnestly in the service of God, and almost put to death their flesh, will not in reality confess that they do violence to the kingdom of heaven.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. q. 87.) They also do violence to the kingdom of heaven, in that they not only despise all temporal things, but also the tongues of those who desire their doing so. This the Evangelist added, when he said that Jesus was derided when He spoke of despising earthly riches.

Bede. But lest they should suppose that in His words, *the Law and the Prophets were until John*, He preached the destruction of the Law or the Prophets, He obviates such a notion, adding, *And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law should fail.* For it is written, the fashion of this world passeth away. (1 Cor. 7:31.) But of the Law, not even the very extreme point of one letter, that is, not even the least things are destitute of spiritual sacraments. And yet the Law and the Prophets were until John, because that could always be prophesied as about to come, which by the preaching of John it was clear had come. But that which He spoke beforehand concerning the perpetual inviolability of the Law, He confirms by one testimony taken therefrom for the sake of example, saying, *Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery*; that from this one instance they should learn that He came not to destroy but to fulfil the commands of the Law.

Theophylact. For that to the imperfect the Law spoke imperfectly is plain from what he says to the hard hearts of the Jews, "If a man hate his wife, let him put her away," (Deut. 24:1.) because since they were murderers and rejoiced in blood, they had no pity even upon those who were united to them, so that they slew their sons and daughters for devils. But now there is need of a more perfect doctrine. Wherefore I say, that if a man puts away his wife, having no excuse of fornication, he commits adultery, and he who marrieth another commits adultery.

Ambrose. But we must first speak, I think, of the law of marriage, that we may afterwards discuss the forbidding of divorce. Some think that all marriage is sanctioned by God, because it is written, *Whom God hath joined, let not man put asunder.* (Matt. 19:6.) How then does the Apostle say, *If the unbelieving depart, let him depart?* (Mark 10:9, 1 Cor. 7:15.) Herein he shews that the marriage of all is not from God. For neither by God's approval are Christians joined with Gentiles. Do not then put away thy wife, lest thou deny God to be the Author of thy union. For if others, much more oughtest thou to bear with and correct the behaviour of thy wife. And if she is sent away pregnant with children, it is a hard thing to shut out the parent and keep the pledge; so as to add to the parents' disgrace the loss also of filial affection. Harder still if because of the mother thou drivest away the children also. Wouldest thou suffer in thy lifetime thy children to be under a step-father, or when the mother was alive to be under a step-mother? How dangerous to expose to error the tender age of a young wife. How wicked to desert in old age one, the flower of whose growth thou hast blighted. Suppose that being divorced she does not marry, this also ought to be displeasing to you, to whom though an adulterer, she keeps her troth. Suppose she marries, her necessity is thy crime, and that which thou supposest marriage, is adultery.

But to understand it morally. Having just before set forth that the kingdom of God is preached, and said that one tittle could not fall from the Law, He added, *Whosoever putteth away his wife, &c.* Christ is the husband; whomsoever then God has brought to His son, let not persecution sever, nor lust entice, nor philosophy spoil, nor heretics taint, nor Jew seduce. Adulterers are all such as desire to corrupt truth, faith, and wisdom.

16:19–21

19. There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21. And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Bede. Our Lord had just before advised the making friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness, which the Pharisees derided. He next confirms by examples what he had set before them, saying, *There was a certain rich man, &c.*

Chrysostom. There was, not is, because he had passed away as a fleeting shadow.

Ambrose. But not all poverty is holy, or all riches criminal, but as luxury disgraces riches, so does holiness commend poverty.

It follows, *And he was clothed in purple and fine linen.*

Bede. (bysso.) Purple, the colour of the royal robe, is obtained from sea shells, which are scraped with a knife. Byssus is a kind of white and very fine linen.

Gregory. (Hom. 40. in Ev.) Now if the wearing of fine and precious robes were not a fault, the word of God would never have so carefully expressed this. For no one seeks costly garments except for vainglory, that he may seem more honourable than others; for no one wishes to be clothed with such, where he cannot be seen by others.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Ashes, dust, and earth he covered with purple, and silk; or ashes, dust, and earth bore upon them purple and silk. As his garments were, so was also his food. Therefore with us also as our food is, such let our clothing be Hence it follows, *And he fared sumptuously every day.*

Gregory. (Hom. 40. in Ev.) And here we must narrowly watch ourselves, seeing that banquets can scarcely be celebrated blamelessly, for almost always luxury accompanies feasting; and when the body is swallowed up in the delight of refreshing itself, the heart relaxes to empty joys.

It follows, *And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus.*

Ambrose. This seems rather a narrative than a parable, since the name is also expressed.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) But a parable is that in which an example is given, while the names are omitted. Lazarus is interpreted, "one who was assisted." For he was poor, and the Lord helped him.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else; This discourse concerning the rich man and Lazarus was written after the manner of a comparison in a parable, to declare that they who abound in earthly riches, unless they will relieve the necessities of the poor, shall meet with a heavy condemnation. But the tradition of the Jews relates that there was at that time in Jerusalem a certain Lazarus who was afflicted with extreme poverty and sickness, whom our Lord remembering, introduces him into the example for the sake of adding greater point to His words.

Gregory. (Moral. 1. c. 8.) We must observe also, that among the heathen the names of poor men are more likely to be known than of rich. Now our Lord mentions the name of the poor, but not the name of the rich, because God knows and approves the humble, but not the proud. But that the poor man might be more approved, poverty and sickness were at the same time consuming him; as it follows, *who was laid at his gale full of sores.*

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (Hom. de Div.) He lay at his gate for this reason, that the rich might not say, I never saw him, no one told me; for he saw him both going out and returning. The poor is full of sores, that so he might set forth in his own body the cruelty of the rich. Thou seest the death of thy body lying before the gate, and thou pitiest not. If thou regardest not the commands of God, at least have compassion on thy own state, and fear lest also thou become such as he. But sickness has some comfort if it receives help. How great then was the punishment in that body, in which with such wounds he remembered not the pain of his sores, but only his hunger; for it follows, *desiring to be fed with the crumbs, &c.* As if he said, What thou throwest away from thy table, afford for alms, make thy losses gain.

Ambrose. But the insolence and pride of the wealthy is manifested afterwards by the clearest tokens, for it follows, *and no one gave to him.* For so unmindful are they of the condition of mankind, that as if placed above nature they derive from the wretchedness of the poor an incitement to their own pleasure, they laugh at the destitute, they mock the needy, and rob those whom they ought to pity.

Augustine. (Serm. 367.) For the covetousness of the rich is insatiable, it neither fears God nor regards man, spares not a father, keeps not its fealty to a friend, oppresses the widow, attacks the property of a ward.

Gregory. (in Ev. Hom. 40.) Moreover the poor man saw the rich as he went forth surrounded by flatterers, while he himself lay in sickness and want, visited by no one. For that no one came to visit him, the dogs witness, who fearlessly licked his sores, for it follows, *moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.*

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Those sores which no man deigned to wash and dress, the beasts tenderly lick.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) By one thing Almighty God displayed two judgments. He permitted Lazarus to lie before the rich man's gate, both that the wicked rich man might increase the vengeance of his condemnation, and the poor man by his trials enhance his reward; the one saw daily him on whom he should shew mercy, the other that for which he might be approved.

16:22–26

22. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23. And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) We have heard how both fared on earth, let us see what their condition is among the dead. That which was temporal has passed away; that which follows is eternal. Both died; the one angels receive, the other torments; for it is said, *And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels, &c.* Those great sufferings are suddenly exchanged for bliss. He is carried after all his labours, because he had fainted, or at least that he might not tire by walking; and he was earned by angels. One angel was not sufficient to carry the poor man, but many come,

that they may make a joyful band, each angel rejoicing to touch so great a burden. Gladly do they thus encumber themselves, that so they may bring men to the kingdom of heaven. But he was carried into Abraham's bosom, that he might be embraced and cherished by him; *Abraham's bosom* is Paradise. And the ministering angels carried the poor man, and placed him in Abraham's bosom, because though he lay despised, he yet despaired not nor blasphemed, saying, This rich man living in wickedness is happy and suffers no tribulation, but I cannot get even food to supply my wants.

Augustine. (de Orig. Anim. 4. 16) Now as to your thinking Abraham's bosom to be any thing bodily, I am afraid lest you should be thought to treat so weighty a matter rather lightly than seriously. For you could never be guilty of such folly, as to suppose the corporeal bosom of one man able to hold so many souls, nay, to use your own words, so many bodies as the Angels carry thither as they did Lazarus. But perhaps you imagine that one soul to have alone deserved to come to that bosom. If you would not fall into a childish mistake, you must understand Abraham's bosom to be a retired and hidden resting-place where Abraham is; and therefore called Abraham's, not that it is his alone, but because he is the father of many nations, and placed first, that others might imitate his preeminence of faith.

Gregory. (in Hom. 40.) When the two men were below on earth, that is, the poor and the rich, there was one above who saw into their hearts, and by trials exercised the poor man to glory, by endurance awaited the rich man to punishment. Hence it follows, *The rich man also died.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 6. in 2 ad Cor.) He died then indeed in body, but his soul was dead before. For he did none of the works of the soul. All that warmth which issues from the love of our neighbour had fled, and he was more dead than his body. (Conc. 2. de Lazaro.). But no one is spoken of as having ministered to the rich man's burial as to that of Lazarus. Because when he lived pleasantly in the broad road, he had many busy flatterers; when he came to his end, all forsook him. For it simply follows, *and was buried in hell.* But his soul also when living was buried, enshrined in its body as it were in a tomb.

Augustine. The burial in hell is the lowest depth of torment which after this life devours the proud and unmerciful.

Pseudo-Basil. (In Esai. 5.) Hell is a certain common place in the interior of the earth, shaded on all sides and dark, in which there is a kind of opening stretching downward, through which lies the descent of the souls who are condemned to perdition.

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (Chrys. Op. imp, Hom. 53. Matt. 8:22, 25.) Or as the prisons of kings are placed at a distance without, so also hell is somewhere far off without the world, and hence it is called the outer darkness.

Theophylact. But some say that hell is the passing from the visible to the invisible, and the unfashioning of the soul. For as long as the soul of the sinner is in the body, it is visible by means of its own operations. But when it flies out of the body, it becomes shapeless.

Chrysostom. (Conc. 2. de Lazaro.) As it made the poor man's affliction heavier while he lived to lie before the rich man's gate, and to behold the prosperity of others, so when the rich man was dead it added to his desolation, that he lay in hell and saw the happiness of Lazarus, feeling not only by the nature of His own torments, but also by the comparison of Lazarus's honour, his own punishment the more intolerable. Hence it follows, *But lifting up his eyes*, He lifted up his eyes that he might look on him, not despise him; for Lazarus was above, he below. Many angels earned Lazarus; he was seized by endless torments. Therefore it is not said, *being in* torment, but *torments*. For he was wholly in torments, his eyes alone were free, so that he might behold the joy of another. His eyes are allowed to be free that he may be the more tortured, not having that which another has. The riches of others are the torments of those who are in poverty.

Gregory. (lib. 4. Mor. c. 29.) Now if Abraham sate below, the rich man placed in torments would not see him. For they who have followed the path to the heavenly country, when they leave the flesh, are kept back by the gates of hell; not that punishment smites them as sinners, but that resting in some more remote places, (for the intercession of the Mediator was not yet come,) the guilt of their first fault prevents them from entering the kingdom.

Chrysostom. (ad Hom. 2. in ep. Phil. Chrys. Conc. de Laz.) There were many poor righteous men, but he who lay at his door met his sight to add to his woe. For it follows, *And Lazarus in his bosom.* It may here be observed, that all who are offended by us are exposed to our view. But the rich man sees Lazarus not with any other righteous man, but in Abraham's bosom. For Abraham was full of love, but the man is convicted of cruelty. Abraham sitting before his door followed after those that passed by, and brought them into his house, the other turned away even them that abode within his gate.

Gregory. (Hom. 40. in Ev.) And this rich man forsooth, now fixed in his doom, seeks as his patron him to whom in this life he would not shew mercy.

Theophylact. He does not however direct his words to Lazarus, but to Abraham, because he was perhaps ashamed, and thought Lazarus would remember his injuries; but he judged of him from himself. Hence it follows, *And he cried and said.*

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (Hom. de Div.) Great punishments give forth a great cry. *Father Abraham.* As if he said, I call thee father by nature, as the son who wasted his living, although by my own fault I have lost thee as a father. *Have mercy on me.* In vain thou workest repentance, when there is no place for repentance; thy torments drive thee to act the penitent, not the desires of thy soul. He who is in the kingdom of heaven, I know not whether he can have compassion on him who is in hell. The Creator pitieth His creature. There came one Physician who was to heal all; others could not heal. *Send Lazarus.* Thou errest, wretched man. Abraham cannot send, but he can receive. *To dip the tip of his finger in water.* Thou wouldest not deign to look upon Lazarus, and now thou desirest his finger. What thou seekest now, thou oughtest to have done to him when alive. Thou art in want of water, who before despisedst delicate food. Mark the conscience of the sinner; he durst not ask for the whole of the finger. We are instructed also how good a thing it is not to trust in riches. (Chrys. Conc. 2. de Laz). See the rich man in need of the poor who was before starving. Things are changed, and it is now made known to all who was rich and who was poor. For as in the theatres, when it grows towards evening, and the spectators depart, then going out, and laying aside their dresses, they who seemed kings and generals are seen as they really are, the sons of gardeners and fig-sellers. So also when death is come, and the spectacle is over, and all the masks of poverty and riches are put off, by their works alone are men judged, which are truly rich, which poor, which are worthy of honour, which of dishonour.

Gregory. (ut sup.) For that rich man who would not give to the poor man even the scraps of his table, being in hell came to beg for even the least thing. For he sought for a drop of water, who refused to give a crumb of bread.

Basil. But he receives a meet reward, fire and the torments of hell; the parched tongue; for the tuneful lyre, wailing; for drink, the intense longing for a drop; for curious or wanton spectacles, profound darkness; for busy flattery, the undying worm. Hence it follows, *That he may cool my tongue, for I am tormented in the flame.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) But not because he was rich was he tormented, but because he was not merciful.

Gregory. We may gather from this, with what torments he will be punished who robs another, if he is smitten with the condemnation to hell, who does not distribute what is his own.

Ambrose. He is tormented also because to the luxurious man it is a punishment to be without his pleasures; water is also a refreshment to the soul which is set fast in sorrow.

Gregory. But what means it, that when in torments he desires his tongue to be cooled, except that at his feasts having sinned in talking, now by the justice of retribution, his tongue was in fierce flame; for talkativeness is generally rife at the banquet.

Chrysostom. His tongue too had spoken many proud things. Where the sin is, there is the punishment; and because the tongue offended much, it is the more tormented.

Chrysostom. Or, in that he wishes his tongue to be cooled, when he was altogether burning in the flame, that is signified which is written, *Death and life are in the hands of the tongue*, (Prov. 18:21.) and *with the mouth confession is made to salvation*; (Rom. 10:10.) which from pride he did not do, but the tip of the finger means the very least work in which a man is assisted by the Holy Spirit.

Augustine. (de Orig. Anim. 4. 16.) Thou sayest that the members of the soul are here described, and by the eye thou wouldest have the whole head understood, because he was said to lift up his eyes; by the tongue, the jaws; by the finger, the hand. But what is the reason that those names of members when spoken of God do not to thy mind imply a body, but when of the soul they do? It is that when spoken of the creature they are to be taken literally, but when of the Creator metaphorically and figuratively. Wilt thou then give us bodily wings, seeing that not the Creator, but man, that is, the creature, says, *If I take not the wings in the morning?* (Ps. 139:9.) Besides, if the rich man had a bodily tongue, because he said, *to cool my tongue*, in us also who live in the flesh, the tongue itself has bodily hands, for it is written, *Death and life are in the hands of the tongue.* (Prov. 18:21.)

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. 5. de Beat.) As the most excellent of mirrors represents an image of the face, just such as the face itself which is opposite to it, a joyful image of that which is joyful, a sorrowful of that which is sorrowful; so also is the just judgment of God adapted to our dispositions. Wherefore the rich man because he pitied not the poor as he lay at his gate, when he needs mercy for himself, is not heard, for it follows, *And Abraham said unto him, Son, &c.*

Chrysostom. (Conc. 2, 3. de Lazaro.) Behold the kindness of the Patriarch; he calls him son, (which may express his tenderness,) yet gives no aid to him who had deprived himself of cure. Therefore he says, *Remember*, that is, consider the past, forget not that thou delightedst in thy riches, and *thou receivedst good things in thy life*, that is, such as thou thoughtest to be good. Thou couldest not both have triumphed on earth, and triumph here. Riches can not be true both on earth and below. It follows, *And Lazarus likewise evil things*; not that Lazarus thought them evil, but he spoke this according to the opinion of the rich man, who thought poverty, and hunger, and severe sickness, evils. When the heaviness of sickness harasses us, let us think of Lazarus, and joyfully accept evil things in this life.

Augustine. (Quæst. Ev. Lib. ii. qu. 38.) All this then is said to Him because he chose the happiness of the world, and loved no other life but that in which he proudly boasted; but he says, *Lazarus received evil things*, because he knew that the perishableness of this life, its labours, sorrows, and sickness, are the penalty of sin, for we all die in Adam who by transgression was made liable to death.

Chrysostom. (Conc. 3. de Lazaro.) He says, *Thou receivedst good things in thy life*, (as if thy due;) as though he said, If thou hast done any good thing for which a reward might be due, thou hast received all things in that world, living luxuriously, abounding in riches, enjoying the pleasure of prosperous undertakings; but he if he committed any evil has received all, afflicted with poverty, hunger, and the depths of wretchedness. And each of you came hither naked; Lazarus indeed of sin, wherefore he receives his consolation; thou of righteousness, wherefore thou endurest thy inconsolable punishment; and hence it follows, *But now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.*

Gregory. (in Hom. 40.) Whatsoever then ye have well in this world, when ye recollect to have done any thing good, be very fearful about it, lest the prosperity granted you be your recompense for the same good. And when ye behold poor men doing any thing blameably, fear not, seeing that perhaps those whom the remains of the slightest iniquity defiles, the fire of honesty cleanses.

Chrysostom. (Conc. 3. de Lazaro.) But you will say, Is there no one who shall enjoy pardon, both here and there? This is indeed a hard thing, and among those which are impossible. For should poverty press not, ambition urges; if sickness provoke not, anger inflames; if temptations assail not, corrupt thoughts often overwhelm. It is no slight toil to bridle anger, to cheek unlawful desires, to subdue the swellings of vain-glory, to quell pride or haughtiness, to lead a severe life. He that doeth not these things, can not be saved.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) It may also be answered, that evil men receive in this life good things, because they place their whole joy in transitory happiness, but the righteous may indeed have good things here, yet not receive them for reward, because while they seek better things, that is, eternal, in their judgment whatever good things are present seem by no means good.

Chrysostom. (in Conc. de Laz.) But after the mercy of God, we must seek in our own endeavours for hope of salvation, not in numbering fathers, or relations, or friends. For brother does not deliver brother; and therefore it is added, *And beside all this between us and yon there is a great gulf fixed.*

Theophylact. The great gulf signifies the distance of the righteous from sinners. For as their affections were different, so also their abiding places do not slightly differ.

Chrysostom. The gulf is said to be fixed, because it cannot be loosened, moved, or shaken.

Ambrose. Between the rich and the poor then there is a great gulf, because after death rewards cannot be changed. Hence it follows, *So that they who would pass from hence to you cannot, nor come thence to us.*

Chrysostom. As if he says, We can see, we cannot pass; and we see what we have escaped, you what you have lost; our joys enhance your torments, your torments our joys.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) For as the wicked desire to pass over to the elect, that is, to depart from the pangs of their sufferings, so to the afflicted and tormented would the just pass in their mind by compassion, and wish to set them free. But the souls of the just, although in the goodness of their nature they feel compassion, after being united to the righteousness of their Author, are constrained by such great uprightness as not to be moved with compassion towards the reprobate. Neither then do the unrighteous pass over to the lot of the blessed, because they are bound in everlasting

condemnation, nor can the righteous pass to the reprobate, because being now made upright by the righteousness of judgment, they in no way pity them from any compassion.

Theophylact. You may from this derive an argument against the followers of Origen, who say, that since an end is to be placed to punishments, there will be a time when sinners shall be gathered to the righteous and to God.

Augustine. (Qu. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 88.) For it is shewn by the unchangeableness of the Divine sentence, that no aid of mercy can be rendered to men by the righteous, even though they should wish to give it; by which he reminds us, that in this life men should relieve those they can, since hereafter even if they be well received, they would not be able to give help to those they love. For that which was written, *that they may receive you into everlasting habitations*, was not said of the proud and unmerciful, but of those who have made to themselves friends by their works of mercy, whom the righteous receive, not as if by their own power benefitting them, but by Divine permission.

16:27–31

27. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28. For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

Gregory. (Hom. 40. in Ev.) When the rich man in flames found that all hope was taken away from him, his mind turns to those relations whom he had left behind, as it is said, *Then said he, I pray thee therefore, father Abraham, to send him to my father's house.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) He asks that Lazarus should be sent, because he felt himself unworthy to offer testimony to the truth. And as he had not obtained even to be cooled for a little while, much less does he expect to be set free from hell for the preaching of the truth.

Chrysostom. Now mark his perverseness; not even in the midst of his torments does he keep to truth. If Abraham is thy father, how sayest thou, Send him to thy father's house? But thou hast not forgotten thy father, for he has been thy ruin.

Gregory. (ut sup.) The hearts of the wicked are sometimes by their own punishment taught the exercise of charity, but in vain; so that they indeed have an especial love to their own, who while attached to their sins did not love themselves. Hence it follows, *For I have five brethren, that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment.*

Ambrose. But it is too late for the rich man to begin to be master, when he has no longer time for learning or teaching.

Gregory. (ut sup.) And here we must remark what fearful sufferings are heaped upon the rich man in flames. For in addition to his punishment, his knowledge and memory are preserved. He knew Lazarus whom he despised, he remembered his brethren whom he left. For that sinners in punishment may be still more punished, they both see the glory of those whom they had despised, and are harassed about the punishment of those whom they have unprofitably loved. But to the rich man seeking Lazarus to be sent to them, Abraham immediately answers, as follows, *Abraham saith to him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them.*

Chrysostom. (Conc. 4. de Lazaro.) As if he said, Thy brethren are not so much thy care as God's, who created them, and appointed them teachers to admonish and urge them. But by Moses and the Prophets, he here means the Mosaic and prophetic writings.

Ambrose. In this place our Lord most plainly declares the Old Testament to be the ground of faith, thwarting the treachery of the Jews, and precluding the iniquity of Heretics.

Gregory. (in Hom. 40.) But he who had despised the words of God, supposed that his followers could not hear them. Hence it is added, *And he said, Nay, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead they would repent.* For when he heard the Scriptures he despised them, and thought them fables, and therefore according to what he felt himself, he judged the like of his brethren.

Gregory of Nyssa. (lib. de Anima.) But we are also taught something besides, that the soul of Lazarus is neither anxious about present things, nor looks back to aught that it has left behind, but the rich man, (as it were caught by birdlime,) even after death is held down by his carnal life. For a man who becomes altogether carnal in his heart, not even after he has put off his body is out of the reach of his passions.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) But soon the rich man is answered in the words of truth; for it follows, *And he said unto him, If they hear not, Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe though one rose from the dead.* For they who despise the words of the Law, will find the commands of their Redeemer who rose from the dead, as they are more sublime, so much the more difficult to fulfil.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) But that it is true that he who hears not the Scriptures, takes no heed to the dead who rise again, the Jews have testified, who at one time indeed wished to kill Lazarus, but at another laid hands upon the Apostles, notwithstanding that some had risen from the dead at the hour of the Cross. Observe this also, that every dead man is a servant, but whatever the Scriptures say, the Lord says. Therefore let it be that dead men should rise again, and an angel descend from heaven, the Scriptures are more worthy of credit than all. For the Lord of Angels, the Lord as well of the living and the dead, is their author. But if God knew this that the dead rising again, profited the living, He would not have omitted it, seeing that He disposes all things for our advantage. Again, if the dead were often to rise again, this too would in time be disregarded. And the devil also would easily insinuate perverse doctrines, devising resurrection also by means of his own instruments, not indeed really raising up the deceased, but by certain delusions deceiving the sight of the beholders, or contriving, that is, setting up some to pretend death.

Augustine. (de cura pro Mortuis habenda.) But some one may say, If the dead have no care for the living, how did the rich man ask Abraham, that he should send Lazarus to his five brethren? But because he said this, did the rich man therefore know what his brethren were doing, or what was their condition at that time? His care about the living was such that he might yet be altogether ignorant what they were doing, just as we care about the dead,

although we know nothing of what they do. But again the question occurs, How did Abraham know that Moses and the prophets are here in their books? whence also had he known that the rich man had lived in luxury, but Lazarus in affliction. Not surely when these things were going on in their lifetime, but at their death he might know through Lazarus' telling him, that in order that might not be false which the prophet says; *Abraham heard us not*. (Isa. 63:10.) The dead might also hear something from the angels who are ever present at the things which are done here. They might also know some things which it was necessary for them to have known, not only past, but also future, through the revelation of the Church of God.

Augustine. (Quæst. Ev. ii. qu. 38.) But these things may be so taken in allegory, that by the rich man we understand the proud Jews ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own. The purple and fine linen are the grandeur of the kingdom. *And the kingdom of God* (he says) *shall be taken away from you*. (Rom. 10:3.) The sumptuous feasting is the boasting of the Law, in which they gloried, rather abusing it to swell their pride, than using it as the necessary means of salvation. But the beggar, by name Lazarus, which is interpreted "assisted," signifies want; as, for instance, some Gentile, or Publican, who is all the more relieved, as he presumes less on the abundance of his resources.

Gregory. (in Hom. 40. in Ev.) Lazarus then full of sores, figuratively represents the Gentile people, who when turned to God, were not ashamed to confess their sins. Their wound was in the skin. For what is confession of sins but a certain bursting forth of wounds. But Lazarus, full of wounds, *desired to be fed by the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, and no one gave to him*; because that proud people disdained to admit any Gentile to the knowledge of the Law, and words flowed down to him from knowledge, as the crumbs fell from the table.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) But the dogs which licked the poor man's sores are those most wicked men who loved sin, who with a large tongue cease not to praise the evil works, which another loathes, groaning in himself, and confessing.

Gregory. Sometimes also in the holy Word by dogs are understood preachers; according to that, *That the tongue of thy dogs may be red by the very blood of thy enemies*; (Ps. 68:23. Vulg.) for the tongue of dogs while it licks the wound heals it; for holy teachers, when they instruct us in confession of sin, touch as it were by the tongue the soul's wound. The rich man was buried in hell, but Lazarus was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, that is, into that secret rest of which the truth says, *Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall lie down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness*. But being afar off, the rich man lifted up his eyes to behold Lazarus, because the unbelievers while they suffer the sentence of their condemnation, lying in the deep, fix their eyes upon certain of the faithful, abiding before the day of the last Judgment in rest above them, whose bliss afterwards they would in no wise contemplate. But that which they behold is afar off, for thither they cannot attain by their merits. But he is described to burn chiefly in his tongue, because the unbelieving people held in their mouth the word of the Law, which in their deeds they despised to keep. In that part then a man will have most burning wherein he most of all shews he knew that which he refused to do. Now Abraham calls him his son, whom at the same time he delivers not from torments; because the fathers of this unbelieving people, observing that many have gone aside from their faith, are not moved with any compassion to rescue them from torments, whom nevertheless they recognise as sons.

Augustine. (Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 39.) By the five brothers whom he says he has in his father's house, he means the Jews who were called five, because they were bound under the Law, which was given by Moses who wrote five books.

Chrysostom. Or he had five brothers, that is, the five senses, to which he was before a slave, and therefore he could not love Lazarus because his brethren loved not poverty. Those brethren have sent thee into these torments, they cannot be saved unless they die; otherwise it must needs be that the brethren dwell with their brother. But why seekest thou that I should send Lazarus? They have Moses and the Prophets. Moses was the poor Lazarus who counted the poverty of Christ greater than the riches of Pharaoh. (Heb. 11:26.) Jeremiah, cast into the dungeon, was fed on the bread of affliction; and all the prophets teach those brethren. (Jer. 38:9.) But those brethren cannot be saved unless some one rise from the dead. For those brethren, before Christ was risen, brought me to death; He is dead, but those brethren have risen again. For my eye sees Christ, my ear hears Him, my hands handle Him. From what we have said then, we determine the fit place for Marcion and Manichæus, who destroy the Old Testament. See what Abraham says, *If they hear not Moses and the prophets*. As though he said, Thou doest well by expecting Him who is to rise again; but in them Christ speaks. If thou wilt hear them, thou wilt hear Him also.

Gregory. (in Hom. 40.) But the Jewish people, because they disdained to spiritually understand the words of Moses, did not come to Him of whom Moses had spoken.

Ambrose. Or else, Lazarus is poor in this world, but rich to God; for not all poverty is holy, nor all riches vile, but as luxury disgraces riches, so holiness commends poverty. Or is there any Apostolical man, poor in speech, but rich in faith, who keeps the true faith, requiring not the appendage of words. To such a one I liken him who oft-times beaten by the Jews offered the wounds of his body to be licked as it were by certain dogs. Blessed dogs, unto whom the dropping from such wounds so falls as to fill the heart and mouth of those whose office it is to guard the house, preserve the flock, keep off the wolf! And because the word is bread, our faith is of the word; the crumbs are as it were certain doctrines of the faith, that is to say, the mysteries of the Scriptures. But the Arians, who court the alliance of regal power that they may assail the truth of the Church, do not they seem to you to be in purple and fine linen? And these, when they defend the counterfeit instead of the truth, abound in flowing discourses. Rich heresy has composed many Gospels, and poor faith has kept this single Gospel, which it had received. Rich philosophy has made itself many gods, the poor Church has known only one. Do not those riches seem to you to be poor, and that poverty to be rich?

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Again also that story may be so understood, as that we should take Lazarus to mean our Lord; *lying at the gate of the rich man*, because he condescended to the proud ears of the Jews in the lowliness of His incarnation; *desiring to be fed from the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table*, that is, seeking from them even the least works of righteousness, which through pride they would not use for their own table, (that is, their own power,) which works, although very slight and without the discipline of perseverance in a good life, sometimes at least they might do by chance, as crumbs frequently fall from the table. The wounds are the sufferings of our Lord, the dogs who licked them are the Gentiles, whom the Jews called unclean, and yet, with the sweetest odour of devotion, they lick the sufferings of our Lord in the Sacraments of His Body and Blood throughout the whole world. Abraham's bosom is understood to be the hiding place of the Father, whither after His Passion our Lord rising again was taken up, whither He was said to be carried by the angels, as it seems to me, because that reception by which Christ reached the Father's secret place the angels announced to the disciples. The rest may be taken according to the former explanation, because that is well understood to be the Father's secret place, where even before the resurrection the souls of the righteous live with God.

CHAP. 17

17:1–2

1. Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

2. It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

Theophylact. Because the Pharisees were covetous and railed against Christ when He preached poverty, He put to them the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Afterwards, in speaking with His disciples concerning the Pharisees, He declares them to be men who caused division, and placed obstacles in the divine way. As it follows; *Then said he unto his disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come*, that is, hindrances to a good life and which is pleasing to God.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now there are two kinds of offences, of which the one resist the glory of God, but the other serve only to cause a stumbling-block to the brethren. For the inventions of heresies, and every word that is spoken against the truth, are obstructions to the glory of God. Such offences however do not seem to be mentioned here, but rather those which occur between friends and brethren, as strifes, slanders, and the like. Therefore He adds afterwards, *If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him.*

Theophylact. Or, He says that there must arise many obstacles to preaching and to the truth, as the Pharisees hindered the preaching of Christ. But some ask, If it needs be that offences should come, why does our Lord rebuke the author of the offences? for it follows, *But woe to him through whom they come*. For whatsoever necessity engenders is pardonable, or deserving of pardon. But observe, that necessity itself derives its birth from free-will. For our Lord, seeing how men cling to evil, and put forward nothing good, spoke with reference to the consequence of those things which are seen, that offences must needs come; just as if a physician, seeing a man using an unwholesome diet, should say, It is impossible but that such a one should be sick. And therefore to him that causes offences He denounces woe, and threatens punishment, saying, *It were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, &c.*

Bede. This is spoken according to the custom of the province of Palestine; for among the ancient Jews the punishment of those who were guilty of the greater crimes was that they should be sunk into the deep with a stone tied to them; and in truth it were better for a guilty man to finish his bodily life by a punishment however barbarous, yet temporal, than for his innocent brother to deserve the eternal death of his soul. Now he who can be offended is rightly called a little one; for he who is great, whatsoever he is witness of, and how great soever his sufferings, swerves not from the faith. As far then as we can without sin, we ought to avoid giving offence to our neighbours. But if an offence is taken at the truth, it is better to let the offence be, than that truth should be abandoned.

Chrysostom. But by the punishment of the man who offends, learn the reward of him who saves. For had not the salvation of one soul been of such exceeding care to Christ, He would not threaten with such a punishment the offender.

17:3–4

3. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

Ambrose. After the parable of the rich man who is tormented in punishment, Christ added a commandment to give forgiveness to those who turn themselves from their trespasses, lest any one through despair should not be reclaimed from his fault; and hence it is said, *Take heed to yourselves*.

Theophylact. As if He says, Offences must needs come; but it does not follow that you must perish, if only you be on your guard: as it need not that the sheep should perish when the wolf comes, if the shepherd is watching. And since there are great varieties of offenders, (for some are incurable, some are curable,) He therefore adds, *If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him.*

Ambrose. That there might neither be hard-wrung pardon, nor a too easy forgiveness, neither a harsh upbraiding, to dishearten, nor an overlooking of faults, to invite to sin; therefore it is said in another place, *Tell him his fault between him and thee alone*. (Mat. 18:15.) For better is a friendly correction, than a quarrelsome accusation. The one strikes shame into a man, the other moves his indignation. He who is admonished will more likely be saved, because he fears to be destroyed. For it is well that he who is corrected should believe you to be rather his friend than his enemy. For we more readily give ear to counsel than yield to injury. Fear is a weak preserver of consistency, but shame is an excellent master of duty. For he who fears is restrained, not amended. But He has well said, *If he trespass against thee*. For it is not the same thing to sin against God and to sin against man.

Bede. But we must mark, that He does not bid us forgive every one who sins, but him only who repents of his sins. For by taking this course we may avoid offences, hurting no one, correcting the sinner with a righteous zeal, extending the bowels of mercy to the penitent.

Theophylact. But some one may well ask, If when I have several times forgiven my brother he again trespass against me, what must I do with him? In answer therefore to this question He adds, *And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; forgive him.*

Bede. By using the number seven He assigns no bound to the giving of pardon, but commands us either to forgive all sins, or always to forgive the penitent. For by seven the whole of any thing or time is frequently represented.

Ambrose. Or this number is used because God rested on the seventh day from His works. After the seventh day of the world everlasting rest is promised us, that as the evil works of that world shall then cease, so also may the sharpness of punishment be abated.

17:5–6

5. And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.

Theophylact. The disciples hearing our Lord discoursing of certain arduous duties, such as poverty, and avoiding offences, entreat Him to increase their faith, that so they might be able to follow poverty, (for nothing so prompts to a life of poverty as faith and hope in the Lord,) and through faith to guard against giving offences. Therefore it is said, *And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.*

Gregory. (22. Mor. c. 21.) That is, that the faith which has already been received in its beginning, might go on increasing more and more unto perfection.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. lib. 2. qu. 39.) We may indeed understand that they asked for the increase of that faith by which men believe in the things which they see not; but there is further signified a faith in things, whereby not with the words only, but the things themselves present, we believe. And this shall be, when the Wisdom of God, by whom all things were made, shall reveal Himself openly to His saints face to face.

Theophylact. But our Lord told them that they asked well, and that they ought to believe stedfastly, forasmuch as faith could do many things; and hence it follows, *And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, &c.* Two mighty acts are here brought together in the same sentence; the transplanting of that which was rooted in the earth, and the planting thereof in the sea, (for what is ever planted in the waves?) by which two things He declares the power of faith.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 57. in Matt.) He mentions the mustard seed, because, though small in size, it is mightier in power than all the others. He implies then that the least part of faith can do great things. But though the Apostles did not transplant the mulberry tree, do not thou accuse them; for our Lord said not, You shall transplant, but, You shall be able to transplant. But they did not, because there was no need, seeing that they did greater things. (Hom. 32 in 1 ad Cor. c. 13:2.). But some one will ask, How does Christ say, that it is the least part of faith which can transplant a mulberry tree or a mountain, whereas Paul says that it is all faith which moves mountains? We must then answer, that the Apostle imputes the moving of mountains to all faith, not as though only the whole of faith could do this, but because this seemed a great thing to carnal men on account of the vastness of the body.

Bede. Or our Lord here compares perfect faith to a grain of mustard seed, because it is lowly in appearance, but fervid in heart. But mystically by the mulberry tree, (whose fruit and branches are red with a blood-red colour,) is represented the Gospel of the cross, which, through the faith of the Apostles being uprooted by the word of preaching from the Jewish nation, in which it was kept as it were in the lineal stock, was removed and planted in the sea of the Gentiles.

Ambrose. Or this is said because faith keeps out the unclean spirit, especially since the nature of the tree falls in with this meaning. For the fruit of the mulberry is at first white in the blossom, and being formed from thence grows red, and blackens as it gets ripe. The devil also having by transgression fallen from the white flower of the angelic nature and the bright beams of his power, grows terrible in the black odour of sin.

Chrysostom. The mulberry may be also compared to the devil, for as by the leaves of the mulberry tree certain worms are fed, so the devil, by the imaginations which proceed from him, is feeding for us a never dying worm; but this mulberry tree faith is able to pluck out of our souls, and plunge it into the deep.

17:7–10

7. But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8. And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9. Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Theophylact. Because faith makes its possessor a keeper of God's commandments, and adorns him with wonderful works; it would seem from thence that a man might thereby fall into the sin of pride. Our Lord therefore forewarned His Apostles by a fit example, not to boast themselves in their virtues, saying, *But which of you having a servant plowing, &c.*

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. 2. qu. 39.) Or else; To the many who understand not this faith in the truth already present, our Lord might seem not to have answered the petitions of His disciples. And there appears a difficulty in the connexion here, unless we suppose He meant the change from faith to faith, from that faith, namely, by which we serve God, to that whereby we enjoy Him. For then will our faith be increased when we first believe the word preached, next the reality present. But that joyful contemplation possesseth perfect peace, which is given unto us in the everlasting kingdom of God. And that perfect peace is the reward of those righteous labours, which are performed in the administration of the Church. Be then the servant in the field ploughing, or feeding, that is, in this life either following his worldly business, or serving foolish men, as it were cattle, he must after his labours return home, that is, be united to the Church.

Bede. Or the servant departs from the field when giving up for a time his work of preaching, the teacher retires into his own conscience, pondering his own words or deeds within himself. To whom our Lord does not at once say, Go from this mortal life, and sit down to meat, that is, refresh thyself in the everlasting resting-place of a blessed life.

Ambrose. For we know that no one sits down before he has first passed over. Moses indeed also passed over, that he might see a great sight. Since then thou not only sayest to thy servant, *Sit down to meat*, but requirest from him another service, so in this life the Lord does not put up with the performance of one work and labour, because as long as we live we ought always to work. Therefore it follows, *And will not rather say, Make ready wherewith I may sup.*

Bede. He bids make ready wherewith he may sup, that is, after the labours of public discourse, He bids him humble himself in self-examination. With

such a supper our Lord desires to be fed. But to gird one's self is to collect the mind which has been enfolded in the base coil of fluctuating thoughts, whereby its steps in the cause of good works are wont to be entangled. For he who girds up his garments does so, that in walking he may not be tripped up. But to minister unto God, is to acknowledge that we have no strength without the help of His grace.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. ubi sup.) While His servants also are ministering, that is, preaching the Gospel, our Lord is eating and drinking the faith and confession of the Gentiles. It follows, *And afterward thou shall eat and drink.* As if He says, After that I have been delighted with the work of thy preaching, and refreshed myself with the choice food of thy compunction, then at length shalt thou go, and feast thyself everlastingly with the eternal banquet of wisdom.

Cyril of Alexandria. Our Lord teaches us that it is no more than the just and proper right of a master to require, as their bounden duty, subjection from servants, adding, *Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.* Here then is the disease of pride cut away. Why boastest thou thyself? Dost thou know that if thou payest not thy debt, danger is at hand, but if thou payest, thou doest nothing thankworthy? As St. Paul says, *For though I preach the Gospel I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me, yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.* (1 Cor. 9:16.)

Observe then that they who have rule among us, do not thank their subjects, when they perform their appointed service, but by kindness gaining the affections of their people, breed in them a greater eagerness to serve them. So likewise God requires from us that we should wait upon Him as His servants, but because He is merciful, and of great goodness, He promises reward to them that work, and the greatness of His loving-kindness far exceeds the labours of His servants.

Ambrose. Boast not thyself then that thou hast been a good servant. Thou hast done what thou oughtest to have done. The sun obeys, the moon submits herself, the angels are subject; let us not then seek praise from ourselves. Therefore He adds in conclusion, *So likewise ye, when ye have done all good things, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which it was our duty to do.*

Bede. Servants, I say, because bought with a price; (1 Cor. 6:20) unprofitable, for the Lord needeth not our good things, (Ps. 16:2) or because *the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.* (Rom. 8:18.) Herein then is the perfect faith of men, when having done all things which were commanded them, they acknowledge themselves to be imperfect.

17:11–19

11. And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12. And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13. And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16. And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18. There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

Ambrose. After speaking the foregoing parable, our Lord censures the ungrateful;

Titus Bostrensis. saying, *And it came to pass*, shewing that the Samaritans were indeed well disposed towards the mercies above mentioned, but the Jews not so. For there was enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans, and He to allay this, passed into the midst of both nations, that he might cement both into one new man.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Saviour next manifests His glory by drawing over Israel to the faith. As it follows, *And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers*, men who were banished from the towns and cities, and counted unclean, according to the rites of the Mosaic law.

Titus Bostrensis. They associated together from the sympathy they felt as partakers of the same calamity, and were waiting till Jesus passed, anxiously looking out to see Him approach. As it is said, *Which stood afar off*, for the Jewish law esteems leprosy unclean, whereas the law of the Gospel calls unclean not the outward, but the inward leprosy.

Theophylact. They therefore stand afar off as if ashamed of the uncleanness which was imputed to them, thinking that Christ would loathe them as others did. Thus they stood afar off, but were made nigh unto Him by their prayers. *For the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him in truth.* (Ps. 145:18.) Therefore it follows, *And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy upon us.*

Titus Bostrensis. They pronounce the name of Jesus, and gain to themselves the reality. For Jesus is by interpretation Saviour. They say, *Have mercy upon us*, because they were sensible of His power, and sought neither for gold and silver, but that their bodies might put on again a healthful appearance.

Theophylact. They do not merely supplicate or entreat Him as if He were a man, but they call Him Master or Lord, as if almost they looked upon Him as God. But He bids them shew themselves to the priests, as it follows, *And when he saw them, he said, Go, shew yourselves unto the priests.* For they were examined whether they were cleansed from their leprosy or not.

Cyril of Alexandria. The law also ordered, that those who were cleansed from leprosy should offer sacrifice for the sake of their purification.

Theophylact. Therefore in bidding them go to the priests, he meant nothing more than that they were just about to be healed; and so it follows, *And it came to pass that as they went they were healed.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Whereby the Jewish priests who were jealous of His glory might know that it was by Christ granting them health that they were suddenly and miraculously healed.

Theophylact. But out of the ten, the nine Israelites were ungrateful, whereas the Samaritan stranger returned and lifted up his voice in thanksgiving, as it follows, *And one of them turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.*

Titus Bostrensis. When he found that he was cleansed, he had boldness to draw near, as it follows, *And fell down on his face at his feet giving him thanks*. Thus by his prostration and prayers shewing at once both his faith and his gratitude.

It follows, *And he was a Samaritan.*

Theophylact. We may gather from this that a man is not one whit hindered from pleasing God because he comes from a cursed race, only let him bear in his heart an honest purpose. Further, let not him that is born of saints boast himself, for the nine who were Israelites were ungrateful; and hence it follows, *And Jesus answering him said, Were there not ten cleansed?*

Titus Bostrensis. Wherein it is shewn, that strangers were more ready to receive the faith, but Israel was slow to believe; and so it follows, *And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way, thy faith has made thee whole.*

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. qu. 40.) The lepers may be taken mystically for those who, having no knowledge of the true faith, profess various erroneous doctrines. For they do not conceal their ignorance, but blazen it forth as the highest wisdom, making a vain show of it with boasting words. But since leprosy is a blemish in colour, when true things appear clumsily mixed up with false in a single discourse or narration, as in the colour of a single body, they represent a leprosy streaking and disfiguring as it were with true and false dyes the colour of the human form. Now these lepers must be so put away from the Church, that being as far removed as possible, they may with loud shouts call upon Christ. But by their calling Him Teacher, I think it is plainly implied that leprosy is truly the false doctrine which the good teacher may wash away. Now we find that of those upon whom our Lord bestowed bodily mercies, not one did He send to the priests, save the lepers, for the Jewish priesthood was a figure of that priesthood which is in the Church. All vices our Lord corrects and heals by His own power working inwardly in the conscience, but the teaching of infusion by means of the Sacrament, or of catechizing by word of mouth, was assigned to the Church. *And as they went, they were cleansed*; just as the Gentiles to whom Peter came, having not yet received the sacrament of Baptism, whereby we come spiritually to the priests, are declared cleansed by the infusion of the Holy Spirit. Whoever then follows true and sound doctrine in the fellowship of the Church, proclaiming himself to be free from the confusion of lies, as it were a leprosy, yet still ungrateful to his Cleanser does not prostrate himself with pious humility of thanksgiving, is like to those of whom the Apostle says, *that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, nor were thankful.* (Rom. 1:21.) Such then will remain in the ninth number as imperfect. For the nine need one, that by a certain form of unity they may be cemented together, in order to become ten. But he who gave thanks was approved of as a type of the one only Church. And since these were Jews, they are declared to have lost through pride the kingdom of heaven, wherein most of all unity is preserved. But the man who was a Samaritan, which is by interpretation "guardian," giving back to Him who gave it that which he had received, according to the Psalm, *My strength will I preserve for thee*, (Ps. 59:9.) has kept the unity of the kingdom with humble devotion.

Bede. He fell upon his face, because he blushes with shame when he remembers the evils he had committed. And he is commanded to rise and walk, because he who, knowing his own weakness, lies lowly on the ground, is led to advance by the consolation of the divine word to mighty deeds. But if faith made him whole, who hurried himself back to give thanks, therefore does unbelief destroy those who have neglected to give glory to God for mercies received. Wherefore that we ought to increase our faith by humility, as it is declared in the former parable, so in this is it exemplified in the actions themselves.

17:20–21

20. And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

21. Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

Cyril of Alexandria. Because our Saviour, in His discourses which He addressed to others, spake often of the kingdom of God, the Pharisees derided Him; hence it is said, *And when he was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God should come.* As though they said tauntingly, "Before the kingdom of God come, which Thou speakest of, the death of the cross will be Thy lot." But our Lord testifying His patience, when reviled reviles not again, but the rather because they were evil, returns not a scornful answer; for it follows, *He answered and said, The kingdom cometh not with observation*; as if he says, "Seek not to know the time when the kingdom of heaven shall again be at hand. For that time can be observed neither by men nor angels, not as the time of the Incarnation which was proclaimed by the foretelling of Prophets and the heraldings of Angels." Wherefore He adds, *Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there!* Or else, They ask about the kingdom of God, because, as is said below, they thought that on our Lord's coming into Jerusalem, the kingdom of God would be immediately manifested. Therefore our Lord answers, that the kingdom of God will not come with observation.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now it is only for the benefit of each individual that He says that which follows, *For behold the kingdom of God is within you*; that is, it rests with you and your own hearts to receive it. For every man who is justified by faith and the grace of God, and adorned with virtues, may obtain the kingdom of heaven.

Gregory of Nyssa. (lib. de prop. sec. Deum.) Or, perhaps, the kingdom of God being within us, means that joy that is implanted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. For that is, as it were, the image and pledge of the everlasting joy with which in the world to come the souls of the Saints rejoice.

Bede. Or the kingdom of God means that He Himself is placed in the midst of them, that is, reigning in their hearts by faith.

17:22–25

22. And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

23. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them.

24. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.

25. But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.

Cyril of Alexandria. When our Lord said, *The kingdom of God is within you*, He would fain prepare His disciples for suffering, that being made strong they might be able to enter the kingdom of God; He therefore foretells to them, that before His coming from heaven at the end of the world, persecution will break out upon them. Hence it follows, *And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, &c.* meaning that so terrible will be the persecution, that they would desire to see one of His days, that is, of that time when they yet walked with Christ. Truly the Jews ofttimes beset Christ with reproaches and insults, and sought to stone Him, and ofttimes would have hurled Him down from the mountain; but even these seem to be looked upon as slight in comparison of greater evils that are to come.

Theophylact. For their life was then without trouble, for Christ took care of them and protected them. But the time was coming when Christ should be taken away, and they should be exposed to perils, being brought before kings and princes, and then they should long for the first time and its tranquillity.

Bede. Or, by the day of Christ He signifies His kingdom, which we hope will come, and He rightly says, *one day*, because there shall no darkness disturb the glory of that blessed time. It is right then to long for the day of Christ, yet from the earnestness of our longing, let us not vision to ourselves as though the day were at hand. Hence it follows, *And they shall say to you, Lo here! and, Lo there!*

Eusebius. As if he said, If at the coming of Antichrist, his fame shall be spread abroad, as though Christ had appeared, go not out, nor follow him. For it cannot be that He who was once seen on earth, shall any more dwell in the corners of the earth. It will therefore be he of whom we speak, not the true Christ. For this is the clear sign of the second coming of our Saviour, that suddenly the lustre of His coming shall fill the whole world; and so it follows, *For as the lightning that lighteneth, &c.* For He will not appear walking upon the earth, as any common man, but will illuminate our whole universe, manifesting to all men the radiance of His divinity.

Bede. And he well says, *that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven*, because the judgment will be given under the heaven, that is, in the midst of the air, as the Apostle says, *We shall be caught up together with them in the clouds*. (1 Thess. 4:17.) But if the Lord shall appear at the Judgment like lightning, then shall no one remain hidden in the deep of his heart, for the very brightness of the Judge pierces through him; we may also take this answer of our Lord to refer to His coming, whereby He comes daily into His Church. For ofttimes have heretics so vexed the Church, by saying that the faith of Christ stands in their own dogma, that the faithful in those times longed that the Lord would if it were possible even for one day return to the earth, and Himself make known what was the true faith. *And you shall not see it*, because it need not that the Lord should again testify by a bodily presence that which has been spiritually declared by the light of the Gospel, once scattered and diffused throughout the whole world.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now His disciples supposed that He would go to Jerusalem, and would at once make a manifestation of the kingdom of God. To rid them therefore of this belief, He informs them that it became Him first to suffer the Life-giving Passion, then to ascend to the Father and shine forth from above, that He might judge the world in righteousness. Hence He adds, *But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.*

Bede. He means the generation not only of the Jews, but also of all wicked men, by whom even now in His own body, that is, His Church, the Son of man suffers many things, and is rejected. But while He spake many things of His coming in glory, He inserts something also concerning His Passion, that when men saw Him dying, whom they had heard would be glorified, they might both soothe their sorrow for His sufferings by the hope of the promised glory, and at the same time prepare themselves, if they love the glories of His kingdom, to look without alarm upon the horrors of death.

17:26–30

26. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.

27. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded;

29. But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

Bede. The coming of our Lord, which He had compared to lightning flying swiftly across the heavens, He now likens to the days of Noah and Lot, when a sudden destruction came upon mankind.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 1, in Ep. 1. ad Thess.) For refusing to believe the words of warning they were suddenly visited with a real punishment from God; but their unbelief proceeded from self-indulgence, and softness of mind. For such as a man's wishes and inclinations are, will also be his expectations. Therefore it follows, *they eat and drank.*

Ambrose. He rightly declares the deluge to have been caused by our sins, for God did not create evil, but our deservings found it out for themselves. Let it not however be supposed that marriages, or again meat and drink, are condemned, seeing that by the one succession is sustained, by the other nature, but moderation is to be sought for in all things. For whatsoever is more than this is of evil.

Bede. Now Noah builds the ark mystically. The Lord builds His Church of Christ's faithful servants, by uniting them together in one, as smooth pieces of wood; and when it is perfectly finished, He enters it: as at the day of Judgment, He who ever dwells within His Church enlightens it with His visible presence. But while the ark is in building, the wicked flourish, when it is entered, they perish; as they who revile the saints in their warfare here, shall

when they are crowned hereafter be smitten with eternal condemnation.

Eusebius. Having used the example of the deluge, that no one might expect a future deluge by water, our Lord cites, secondly, the example of Lot, to shew the manner of the destruction of the wicked, namely, that the wrath of God would descend upon them by fire from heaven.

Bede. Passing by the unutterable wickedness of the Sodomites, He mentions only those which may be thought trifling offences, or none at all; that you may understand how fearfully unlawful pleasures are punished, when lawful pleasures taken to excess receive for their reward fire and brimstone.

Eusebius. He does not say that fire came down from heaven upon the wicked Sodomites before that Lot went out from them, just as the deluge did not swallow up the inhabitants of the earth before that Noah entered the ark; for as long as Noah and Lot dwelt with the wicked, God suspended His anger that they might not perish together with the sinners, but when He would destroy those, He withdrew the righteous. So also at the end of the world, the consummation shall not come before all the just are separated from the wicked.

Bede. For He who in the mean time though we see Him not yet sees all things, shall then appear to judge all things. And He shall come especially at that time, when He shall see all who are forgetful of His judgments in bondage to this world.

Theophylact. For when Antichrist has come, then shall men become wanton, given up to abominable vices, as the Apostle says, *Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.* (2 Tim. 3:4.) For if Antichrist is the dwelling-place of every sin, what else will he then implant in the miserable race of men, but what belongs to himself. And this our Lord implies by the instances of the deluge and the people of Sodom.

Bede. Now mystically, Lot, which is interpreted 'turning aside,' is the people of the elect, who, while in Sodom, i. e. among the wicked, live as strangers, to the utmost of their power turning aside from all their wicked ways. But when Lot went out, Sodom is destroyed, for at the end of the world, the angels shall go forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and cast them into a furnace of fire. (Matt. 13:49.) The fire and brimstone, however, which He relates to have rained from heaven, does not signify the flame itself of everlasting punishment, but the sudden coming of that day.

17:31–33

31. In that day, he which shall he upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32. Remember Lot's wife.

33. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.

Ambrose. Because good men must needs on account of the wicked be sore vexed in this world, in order that they may receive a more plentiful reward in the world to come, they are here punished with certain remedies, as it is here said, *In that day, &c.* that is, if a man goes up to the top of his house and rises to the summit of the highest virtues, let him not fall back to the grovelling business of this world.

Augustine. For he is on the housetop who, departing from carnal things, breathes as it were the free air of a spiritual life. But the vessels in the house are the carnal senses, which many using to discover truth which is only taken in by the intellect, have entirely missed it. Let the spiritual man then beware, lest in the day of tribulation he again take pleasure in the carnal life which is fed by the bodily senses, and descend to take away this world's vessels. It follows, *And he that is in the field, let him not return back*; that is, He who labours in the Church, as Paul planting and Apollos watering, let him not look back upon the worldly prospects which he has renounced.

Theophylact. Matthew relates all these things to have been said by our Lord, with reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, that when the Romans came upon them, they who were on the housetop should not come down to take any thing, but fly at once, nor they that were in the field return home. And surely so it was at the taking of Jerusalem, and again will be at the coming of Antichrist, but much more at the completion of all things, when that intolerable destruction shall come.

Eusebius. He hereby implies that a persecution will come from the son of perdition upon Christ's faithful. By that day then He means the time previous to the end of the world, in which let not him who is flying return, nor care to lose his goods, lest he imitate Lot's wife, who when she fled out of the city of Sodom, turning back, died, and became a pillar of salt.

Ambrose. Because thus she looked behind, she lost the gift of her nature. For Satan is behind, behind also Sodom. Wherefore flee from intemperance, turn away from lust, for recollect, that he who turned not back to his old pursuits escaped, because he reached the mount; whereas she looking back to what was left behind, could not even by the aid of her husband reach the mount, but remained fixed.

Augustine. Lot's wife represents those who in time of trouble look back and turn aside from the hope of the divine promise, and hence she was made a pillar of salt as a warning to men not to do likewise, and to season as it were their hearts, lest they become corrupt.

Theophylact. Next follows the promise, *Whosoever shall seek, &c.* as if he said, Let no man in the persecutions of Antichrist seek to secure his life, for he shall lose it, but whoso shall expose himself to trials and death shall be safe, never submitting himself to the tyrant from his love of life.

Cyril of Alexandria. How a man may lose his own life to save it, St. Paul explains when he speaks of some who crucified their flesh with the affections and lusts, (Gal. 5:24.) that is, with perseverance and devotion engaging in the conflict.

34. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

37. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

Bede. Our Lord had just before said, that he who is in the field must not return back; and lest this should seem to have been spoken of those only who would openly return from the field, that is, who would publicly deny their Lord, He goes on to shew, that there are some who, while seeming to turn their face forward, are yet in their heart looking behind.

Ambrose. He rightly says, *night*, for Antichrist is the hour of darkness, because he pours a dark cloud over the minds of men while he declares himself to be Christ. But Christ as lightning shines brightly, that we may be able to see in that night the glory of the resurrection.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 41.) Or He says, in that night, meaning in that tribulation.

Theophylact. Or He teaches us the suddenness of Christ's coming, which we are told will be in the night. And having said that the rich can scarcely be saved, He shews that not all the rich perish, nor all the poor are saved.

Cyril of Alexandria. For by the two men in one bed, He seems to denote the rich who repose themselves in worldly pleasures, for a bed is a sign of rest. But not all who abound in riches are wicked, but if one is good and elect in the faith, he will be taken, but another who is not so will be left. For when our Lord descends to judgment, He will send His Angels, who while they leave behind on the earth the rest to suffer punishment, will bring the holy and righteous men to Him; according to the Apostle's words, *We shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet Christ in the air.* (1 Thess 4:17.)

Ambrose. Or out of the same bed of human infirmity, one is left, that is, rejected, another is taken up, that is, is caught to meet Christ in the air. By the two grinding together, he seems to imply the poor and the oppressed. To which belongs what follows. *Two men shall be in the field, &c.* For in these there is no slight difference. For some nobly bear up against the burden of poverty, leading a lowly but honest life, and these shall be taken up; but the others are very active in wickedness, and they shall be left. Or those grinding at the mill seem to represent such as seek nourishment from hidden sources, and from secret places draw forth things openly to view. And perhaps the world is a kind of corn mill, in which the soul is shut up as in a bodily prison. And in this corn mill either the synagogue or the soul exposed to sin, like the wheat, softened by grinding and spoilt by too great moisture, cannot separate the outward from the inner parts, and so is left because its flour dissatisfies. But the holy Church, or the soul which is not soiled by the stains of sin, which grinds such wheat as is ripened by the heat of the eternal sun, presents to God a good flour from the secret shrines of the heart. Who the two men in the field are we may discover if we consider, that there are two minds in us, one of the outer man which wasteth away, the other of the inner man which is renewed by the Sacrament. These are then the labourers in the field, the one of which by diligence brings forth good fruit, the other by idleness loses that which he has. Or those who are compared we may interpret to be two nations, one of which being faithful is taken, the other being unfaithful is left.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. ut sup) Or there are three classes of men here represented. The first is composed of those who prefer their ease and quiet, and busy not themselves in secular or ecclesiastical concerns. And this quiet life of theirs is signified by the bed. The next class embraces those who being placed among the people are governed by teachers. And such he has described by the name of women, because it is best for them to be ruled by the advice of those who are set over them; and he has described these as grinding at the mill, because in their hands revolves the wheel and circle of temporal concerns. And with reference to these matters he has represented them as grinding together, inasmuch as they give their services to the benefit of the Church. The third class are those who labour in the ministry of the Church as in the field of God. In each of these three classes then there are two sorts of men, of which the one abide in the Church and are taken up, the other fall away and are left.

Ambrose. For God is not unjust that He should separate in His reward of their deserts men of like pursuits in life, and not differing in the quality of their actions. But the habit of living together does not equalize the merits of men, for not all accomplish what they attempt, but he only who shall persevere to the end shall be saved.

Cyril of Alexandria. When He said that some should be taken up, the disciples not unprofitably inquire, 'Where, Lord?'

Bede. Our Lord was asked two questions, where the good should be taken up, and where the bad left; He gave only one answer, and left the other to be understood, saying, *Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.*

Cyril of Alexandria. As if He said, As when a dead body is thrown away, all the birds which feed on human flesh flock to it, so when the Son of man shall come, all the eagles, that is, the saints, shall haste to meet Him.

Ambrose. For the souls of the righteous are likened to eagles, because they soar high and forsake the lower parts, and are said to live to a great age. Now concerning the body, we can have no doubt, and above all if we remember that Joseph received the body from Pilate. (Matt. 28.) And do not you see the eagles around the body are the women and Apostles gathered together around our Lord's sepulchre? Do not you see them then, *when he shall come in the clouds, and every eye shall behold him?* (Rev. 1:7.) But the body is that of which it was said, *My flesh is meat indeed*; (John 6:55.) and around this body are the eagles which fly about on the wings of the Spirit, around it also eagles which believe that Christ has come in the flesh. And this body is the Church, in which by the grace of baptism we are renewed in the Spirit.

Eusebius. Or by the eagles feeding on the dead animals, he has here described the rulers of the world, and those who shall at that time persecute the saints of God, in whose power are left all those who are unworthy of being taken up, who are called the body or carcase. Or by the eagles are meant the avenging powers which shall fly about to torment the wicked.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 7.) these things which Luke has given us in a different place from Matthew, he either relates by anticipation, so as to mention beforehand what was afterwards spoken by our Lord, or he means us to understand that they were twice uttered by Him.

CHAP. 18

18:1–8

1. And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;

2. Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:

3. And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.

4. And he would not for a while: but afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

5. Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

8. I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Theophylact. Our Lord having spoken of the trials and dangers which were coming, adds immediately afterward their remedy, namely, constant and earnest prayer.

Chrysostom. He who hath redeemed thee, hath shewn thee what He would have thee do. He would have thee be instant in prayer, He would have thee ponder in thy heart the blessings thou art praying for, He would have thee ask and receive what His goodness is longing to impart. He never refuses His blessings to them that pray, but rather stirs men up by His mercy not to faint in praying. Gladly accept the Lord's encouragement: be willing to do what He commands, not to do what He forbids. Lastly, consider what a blessed privilege is granted thee, to talk with God in thy prayers, and make known to Him all thy wants, while He though not in words, yet by His mercy, answers thee, for He despiseth not petitions, He tires not but when thou art silent.

Bede. We should say that he is always praying, and faints not, who never fails to pray at the canonical hours. Or all things which the righteous man does and says towards God, are to be counted as praying.

Augustine. (lib. ii. qu. 45.) Our Lord utters His parables, either for the sake of the comparison, as in the instance of the creditor, who when forgiving his two debtors all that they owed him was most loved by him who owed him most; or on account of the contrast, from which he draws his conclusion; as, for example, *if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith*. So also here when he brings forward the case of the unjust judge.

Theophylact. We may observe, that irreverence towards man is a token of a greater degree of wickedness. For as many as fear not God, yet are restrained by their shame before men, are so far the less sinful; but when a man becomes reckless also of other men, the burden of his sins is greatly increased.

It follows, *And there was a widow in that city.*

Augustine. The widow may be said to resemble the Church, which appears desolate until the Lord shall come, who now secretly watches over her. But in the following words, *And she came unto him, saying, Avenge me, &c.* we are told the reason why the elect of God pray that they may be avenged; which we find also said of the martyrs in the Revelations of St. John, (Rev. 6:10.) though at the same time we are very plainly reminded to pray for our enemies and persecutors. This avenging of the righteous then we must understand to be, that the wicked may perish. And they perish in two ways, either by conversion to righteousness, or by punishment having lost the opportunity of conversion. Although, if all men were converted to God, there would still remain the devil to be condemned at the end of the world. And since the righteous are longing for this end to come, they are not unreasonably said to desire vengeance.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else; Whenever men inflict injury upon us, we must then think it a noble thing to be forgetful of the evil; but when they offend against the glory of God by taking up arms against the ministers of God's ordinance, we then approach God imploring His help, and loudly rebuking them who impugn His glory.

Augustine. (ut sup.) If then with the most unjust judge, the perseverance of the suppliant at length prevailed even to the fulfilment of her desire, how much more confident ought they to feel who cease not to pray to God, the Fountain of justice and mercy? And so it follows. *And the Lord said, Hear what, &c.*

Theophylact. As if He said, If perseverance could melt a judge defiled with every sin, how much more shall our prayers incline to mercy God the Father of all mercies! But some have given a more subtle meaning to the parable, saying, that the widow is a soul that has put off the old man, (that is, the devil,) who is her adversary, because she approaches God, the righteous Judge, who neither fears (because He is God alone) nor regards man, for with God there is no respect of persons. Upon the widow then, or soul ever supplicating Him against the devil, God shews mercy, and is softened by her importunity. After having taught us that we must in the last days resort to prayer because of the dangers that are coming, our Lord adds, *Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*

Augustine. (Serm. 115.) Our Lord speaks this of perfect faith, which is seldom found on earth. See how full the Church of God is; were there no faith, who would enter it? Were there perfect faith, who would not move mountains?

Bede. When the Almighty Creator shall appear in the form of the Son of man, so scarce will the elect be, that not so much the cries of the faithful as the torpor of the others will hasten the world's fall. Our Lord speaks then as it were doubtfully, not that He really is in doubt, but to reprove us; just as we sometimes, in a matter of certainty, might use the words of doubt, as, for instance, in chiding a servant, "Remember, am I not thy master?"

Augustine. (ut sup.) Our Lord adds this to shew, that when faith fails, prayer dies. In order to pray then, we must have faith, and that our faith fail not, we

must pray. Faith pours forth prayer, and the pouring forth of the heart in prayer gives stedfastness to faith.

18:9–14

9. And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican.

11. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican.

12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13. And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Augustine. (Serm. 115.) Since faith is not a gift of the proud but of the humble, our Lord proceeds to add a parable concerning humility and against pride.

Theophylact. Pride also beyond all other passions disturbs the mind of man. And hence the very frequent warnings against it. It is moreover a contempt of God; for when a man ascribes the good he doth to himself and not to God, what else is this but to deny God? For the sake then of those that so trust in themselves, that they will not ascribe the whole to God, and therefore despise others, He puts forth a parable, to shew that righteousness, although it may bring man up to God, yet if he is clothed with pride, casts him down to hell.

Greek Expositor. (Asterius.) To be diligent in prayer was the lesson taught by our Lord in the parable of the widow and the judge, He now instructs us how we should direct our prayers to Him, in order that our prayers may not be fruitless. The Pharisee was condemned because he prayed heedlessly. As it follows, *The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself.*

Theophylact. It is said "standing," to denote his haughty temper. For his very posture betokens his extreme pride.

Basil. (in Esai. c. 2.) "He prayed with himself," that is, not with God, his sin of pride sent him back into himself. It follows, *God, I thank thee.*

Augustine. (Serm. 115.) His fault was not that he gave God thanks, but that he asked for nothing further. Because thou art full and aboundest, thou hast no need to say, *Forgive us our debts*. What then must be his guilt who impiously fights against grace, when he is condemned who proudly gives thanks? Let those hear who say, "God has made me man, I made myself righteous. O worse and more hateful than the Pharisee, who proudly called himself righteous, yet gave thanks to God that he was so.

Theophylact. Observe the order of the Pharisee's prayer. He first speaks of that which he had not, and then of that which he had. As it follows, *That I am not as other men are.*

Augustine. (ut sup.) He might at least have said, "as many men;" for what does he mean by "other men," but all besides himself? "I am righteous, he says, the rest are sinners."

Gregory. (23. Mor. c. 6.) There are different shapes in which the pride of self-confident men presents itself; when they imagine that either the good in them is of themselves; or when believing it is given them from above, that they have received it for their own merits; or at any rate when they boast that they have that which they have not. Or lastly, when despising others they aim at appearing singular in the possession of that which they have. And in this respect the Pharisee awards to himself especially the merit of good works.

Augustine. (ut sup.) See how he derives from the Publican near him a fresh occasion for pride. It follows, *Or even as this Publican*; as if he says, "I stand alone, he is one of the others."

Chrysostom. (Hom. 2. de Pœn.) To despise the whole race of man was not enough for him; he must yet attack the Publican. He would have sinned, yet far less if he had spared the Publican, but now in one word he both assails the absent, and inflicts a wound on him who was present. (Hom. 3. in Matt.). To give thanks is not to heap reproaches on others. When thou returnest thanks to God, let Him be all in all to thee. Turn not thy thoughts to men, nor condemn thy neighbour.

Basil. (ubi sup.) The difference between the proud man and the scorner is in the outward form alone. The one is engaged in reviling others, the other in presumptuously extolling himself.

Chrysostom. He who rails at others does much harm both to himself and others. First, those who hear him are rendered worse, for if sinners they are made glad in finding one as guilty as themselves, if righteous, they are exalted, being led by the sins of others to think more highly of themselves. Secondly, the body of the Church suffers; for those who hear him are not all content to blame the guilty only, but to fasten the reproach also on the Christian religion. Thirdly, the glory of God is evil spoken of; for as our well-doing makes the name of God to be glorified, so our sins cause it to be blasphemed. Fourthly, the object of reproach is confounded and becomes more reckless and immoveable. Fifthly, the ruler is himself made liable to punishment for uttering things which are not seemly.

Theophylact. It becomes us not only to shun evil, but also to do good; and so after having said, *I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers*, he adds something by way of contrast, *I fast twice in a week.* They called the week the Sabbath, (Sabbatho) from the last day of rest. The Pharisees fasted upon the second and fifth day. He therefore set fasting against the passion of adultery, for lust is born of luxury; but to the extortioners and usurists he opposed the payment of tithes; as it follows, *I give tithes of all I possess*; as if he says, So far am I from indulging in extortion or injuring, that I even give up what is my own.

Gregory. (19. Mor. c. 21.) So it was pride that laid bare to his wily enemies the citadel of his heart, which prayer and fasting had in vain kept closed. Of no use are all the other fortifications, as long as there is one place which the enemy has left defenceless.

Augustine. If you look into his words, you will find that he asked nothing of God. He goes up indeed to pray, but instead of asking God, praises himself, and even insults him that asked. The Publican, on the other hand, driven by his stricken conscience afar off, is by his piety brought near.

Theophylact. Although reported to have stood, the Publican yet differed from the Pharisee, both in his manner and his words, as well as in his having a contrite heart. For he feared to lift up his eyes to heaven, thinking unworthy of the heavenly vision those which had loved to gaze upon and wander after earthly things. He also smote his breast, striking it as it were because of the evil thoughts, and moreover rousing it as if asleep. And thus he sought only that God would be reconciled to him, as it follows, saying, *God, be merciful.*

Chrysostom. He heard the words, that I am not as the Publican. He was not angry, but pricked to the heart. The one uncovered the wound, the other seeks for its remedy. Let no one then ever put forth so cold an excuse as, I dare not, I am ashamed, I cannot open my mouth. The devils have that kind of fear. The devil would fain close against thee every door of access to God.

Augustine. (Serm. 115.) Why then marvel ye, whether God pardons, since He himself acknowledges it. The Publican stood afar off, yet drew near to God. And the Lord was nigh unto him, and heard him, *For the Lord is on high, yet hath he regard to the lowly.* He lifted not so much as his eyes to heaven; that he might be looked upon, he looked not himself. Conscience weighed him down, hope raised him up, he smote his own breast, he exacted judgment upon himself. Therefore did the Lord spare the penitent. Thou hast heard the accusation of the proud, thou hast heard the humble confession of the accused. Hear now the sentence of the Judge; *Verily I say unto you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.*

Chrysostom. (de Inc. Dei Nat. Hom. 5.) This parable represents to us two chariots on the race course, each with two charioteers in it. In one of the chariots it places righteousness with pride, in the other sin and humility. You see the chariot of sin outstrip that of righteousness, not by its own strength but by the excellence of humility combined with it, but the other is defeated not by righteousness, but by the weight and swelling of pride. For as humility by its own elasticity rises above the weight of pride, and leaping up reaches to God, so pride by its great weight easily depresses righteousness. Although therefore thou art earnest and constant in well doing, yet thinkest thou mayest boast thyself, thou art altogether devoid of the fruits of prayer. But thou that bearest a thousand loads of guilt on thy conscience, and only thinkest this thing of thyself that thou art the lowest of all men, shalt gain much confidence before God. And He then goes on to assign the reason of His sentence. *For every one who exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* (in Ps. 142). The word humility has various meanings. There is the humility of virtue, as, *A humble and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.* (Ps. 51:17.) There is also a humility arising from sorrows, as, *He has humbled my life upon the earth.* (Ps. 142:3.) There is a humility derived from sin, and the pride and insatiability of riches. For can any thing be more low and debased than those who grovel in riches and power, and count them great things?

Basil. (in Esai 2. 12.) In like manner it is possible to be honourably elated when your thoughts indeed are not lowly, but your mind by greatness of soul is lifted up towards virtue. This loftiness of mind is seen in a cheerfulness amidst sorrow; or a kind of noble dauntlessness in trouble; a contempt of earthly things, and a conversation in heaven. And this loftiness of mind seems to differ from that elevation which is engendered of pride, just as the stoutness of a well-regulated body differs from the swelling of the flesh which proceeds from dropsy.

Chrysostom. (Hom. de Prof. Ev.) This inflation of pride can cast down even from heaven the man that taketh not warning, but humility can raise a man up from the lowest depth of guilt. The one saved the Publican before the Pharisee, and brought the thief into Paradise before the Apostles; the other entered even into the spiritual powers. But if humility though added to sin has made such rapid advances, as to pass by pride united to righteousness, how much swifter will be its course when you add to it righteousness? It will stand by the judgment-seat of God in the midst of the angels with great boldness. Moreover if pride joined to righteousness had power to depress it, unto what a hell will it thrust men when added to sin? This I say not that we should neglect righteousness, but that we should avoid pride.

Theophylact. But should any one perchance marvel that the Pharisee for uttering a few words in his own praise is condemned, while Job, though he poured forth many, is crowned, I answer, that the Pharisee spoke these at the same time that he groundlessly accused others; but Job was compelled by an urgent necessity to enumerate his own virtues for the glory of God, that men might not fall away from the path of virtue.

Bede. Typically, the Pharisee is the Jewish people, who boast of their ornaments because of the righteousness of the law; but the Publican is the Gentiles, who being at a distance from God confess their sins. Of whom the one for His pride returned humbled, the other for his contrition was thought worthy to draw near and be exalted.

18:15–17

15. And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

16. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

17. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.

Theophylact. After what He had said, our Lord teaches us a lesson of humility by His own example; He does not turn away the little children who are brought to Him, but graciously receives them.

Augustine. (Serm. 115.) To whom are they brought to be touched, but to the Saviour? And as being the Saviour they are presented to Him to be saved, who came to save that which was lost. But with regard to these innocents, when were they lost? The Apostle says, *By one man sin entered into the world.* (Rom. 5:12.) Let then the little children come as the sick to a physician, the lost to their Redeemer.

Ambrose. It may be thought strange by some that the disciples wished to prevent the little children from coming to our Lord, as it is said, *when they saw it, they rebuked them.* But we must understand in this either a mystery, or the effect of their love to Him. For they did it not from envy or harsh feeling towards the children, but they manifested a holy zeal in their Lord's service, that he might not be pressed by the crowds. Our own interest must be given up where an injury is threatened to God. But we may understand the mystery to be, that they desired the Jewish people to be first saved, of whom they were according to the flesh.

They knew indeed the mystery, that to both nations the call was to be made, (for they entreated for the Canaanitish woman,) but perhaps they were still ignorant of the order. It follows, *But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children, &c.* One age is not preferred to another, else it were hurtful to grow up. But why does He say that children are fitter for the kingdom of heaven? It is because they are ignorant of guile, are incapable of theft, dare not return a blow, are unconscious of lust, have no desire for wealth, honours, or ambition. But to be ignorant of these things is not virtue, we must also despise them. For virtue consists not in our inability to sin, but in our unwillingness. Childhood then is not meant here, but that goodness which rivals the simplicity of childhood.

Bede. Hence our Lord pointedly says, *of such*, not "of these," to shew that to character, not to age, is the kingdom given, and to such as have a childlike innocence and simplicity is the promise of the reward.

Ambrose. Lastly, our Saviour expressed this when He said, *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, &c.* What child were Christ's Apostles to imitate but Him of whom Esaias speaks, *Unto us a Child is given?* (Isai. 9:6.) Who *when He was reviled, reviled not again.* (1 Pet. 2.) So that there is in childhood a certain venerable antiquity, and in old age a childlike innocence.

Basil. (in Reg. Brev. ad int. 217.) We shall receive the kingdom of God as a child if we are disposed towards our Lord's teaching as a child under instruction, never contradicting nor disputing with his masters, but trustfully and teachably imbibing learning.

Theophylact. The wise men of the Gentiles therefore who seek for wisdom in a mystery, which is the kingdom of God, and will not receive this without the evidence of logical proof, are rightly shut out from this kingdom.

18:18–23

18. And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19. And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

20. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22. Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

23. And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

Bede. A certain ruler having heard our Lord say, that only those who would be like little children should enter the kingdom of heaven, entreats Him to explain to him not by parable but openly by what works he may merit to obtain eternal life.

Ambrose. That ruler tempting Him said, *Good Master*, he ought to have said, Good God. For although goodness exists in divinity and divinity in goodness, yet by adding *Good Master*, he uses good only in part, not in the whole. For God is good altogether, man partially.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now he thought to detect Christ in blaming the law of Moses, while He introduced His own commands. He went then to the Master, and calling Him *good*, says that he wishes to be taught by Him, for he sought to tempt Him. But He who takes the wise in their craftiness answers him fitly as follows, *Why callest thou me good? there is none good, save God alone.*

Ambrose. He does not deny that He is good, but points to God. None is good then except he be full of goodness. But should it strike any one that it is said, *none is good*, let this also strike him, *save God*, and if the Son is not excepted from God, surely neither is Christ excepted from good. For how is He not good who is born from good? *A good tree brings forth good fruits.* (Matt. 7:17.) How is He not good, seeing that the substance of His goodness which He took unto Him from the Father has not degenerated in the Son which did not degenerate in the Spirit. *Thy good spirit*, he says, *shall lead me into a land of uprightness.* (Ps. 148:10.) But if the Spirit is good who received from the Son, verily He also is good who gave It. Because then it was a lawyer who tempted Him, as is plainly shewn in another book, He therefore well said, *None is good, save God*, that He might remind him that it was written, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*, (Deut. 6:16.) but he the rather *gives thanks to the Lord that He is good.* (Ps. 118.)

Chrysostom. (Hom. 63. in Matt.) Or else; I shall not hesitate to call this ruler covetous, for with this Christ reproaches him, but I say not that he was a tempter.

Titus Bostrensis. When he says then, *Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?* it is the same as if he says, Thou art good; vouchsafe me then an answer to my question. I am learned in the Old Testament, but I see in Thee something far more excellent. For Thou makest no earthly promises, but preachest the kingdom of heaven. Tell me then, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? The Saviour then considering his meaning, because faith is the way to good works, passes over the question he asked, and leads him to the knowledge of faith; as if a man was to ask a physician, "What shall I eat?" and he was to shew him what ought to go before his food. And then He sends him to His Father, saying, *Why callest thou me good?* not that He was not good, for He was the good branch from the good tree, or the good Son of the good Father.

Augustine. (Quæst. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 63.) It may seem that the account given in Matthew is different, where it is said, "Why askest thou me of good?" which might apply better to the question which he asked, *What good shall I do?* (Matt. 10.) In this place he both calls Him good, and asks the question about good. It will be best then to understand both to have been said, *Why callest thou me good?* and, Why askest thou me of good? though the latter may rather be implied in the former.

Titus Bostrensis. After instructing him in the knowledge of the faith, He adds, *Thou knowest the commandments.* As though He said, Know God first, and then will it be time to seek what thou askest.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the ruler expected to hear Christ say, Forsake the commandments of Moses, and listen to Mine. Whereas He sends him to the former; as it follows, *Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

Theophylact. The law first forbids those things to which we are most prone, as adultery for instance, the incitement to which is within us, and of our

nature; and murder, because rage is a great and savage monster. But theft and bearing false witness are sins which men seldom fall into. And besides, the former also are the more grievous sins, therefore He places theft and bearing false witness in the second place, as both less common, and of less weight than the other.

Basil. (in Esai. cap. 1. 23.) Now we must not understand by thieves, only such as cut strips off hides, or commit robberies in the baths. But all such also as, when appointed leaders of legions, or installed governors of states or nations, are guilty of secret embezzlement, or violent and open exactions.

Titus Bostrensis. But you may observe that these commandments consist in not doing certain things; that if thou hast not committed adultery, thou art chaste; if thou stealest not, honestly disposed; if thou bearest not false witness, truth-telling. Virtue then we see is rendered easy through the goodness of the Lawgiver. For He speaks of avoiding of evil, not practising of good. And any cessation from action is easier than any actual work.

Theophylact. Because sin against parents, although a great crime, very rarely happens, He places it last of all, *Honour thy father and mother.*

Ambrose. Honour is concerned not only with paying respect, but also with giving bountifully. For it is honouring to reward deserts. Feed thy father, feed thy mother, and when thou hast fed them thou hast not requited all the pangs and agony thy mother underwent for thee. To the one thou owest all thou hast, to the other all thou art. What a condemnation, should the Church feed those whom thou art able to feed! But it may be said, What I was going to bestow upon my parents, I prefer to give to the Church. God seeks not a gift which will starve thy parents, but the Scripture says as well that parents are to be fed, as that they are to be left for God's sake, should they check the love of a devout mind.

It follows, *And he said, All these things have I kept from my youth up.*

Jerome. (in Matt. 19:19.) The young man speaks false, for if he had fulfilled that which was afterwards placed among the commandments, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, how was it that when he heard, *Go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, he went away sorrowful?*

Bede. Or we must not think him to have lied, but to have avowed that he had lived honestly, that is, at least in outward things, else Mark could never have said, *And Jesus seeing him, loved him.* (Mark. 10:21.)

Titus Bostrensis. Our Lord next declares, that though a man has kept the old covenant, he is not perfect, since he lacks to follow Christ. *Thou yet lackest one thing, Sell all that thou hast, &c.* As if He says, Thou askest how to possess eternal life; scatter thy goods among the poor, and thou shalt obtain it. A little thing is that thou spendest, thou receivest great things.

Athanasius. (ex Apol. de sua fuga.) For when we despise the world, we must not imagine we have resigned any thing great, for the whole earth in comparison of the heaven is but a span long; therefore even should they who renounce it be lords of the whole earth, yet still it would be nothing worth in comparison of the kingdom of heaven.

Bede. Whoever then wishes to be perfect must sell all that he hath, not a part only, as Ananias and Sapphira did, but the whole.

Theophylact. Hence when he says, *All that thou hast*, He inculcates the most complete poverty. For if there is any thing left over or remaining to thee, thou art its slave.

Basil. (in Reg. Brev. int. 92.) He does not tell us to sell our goods, because they are by nature evil, for then they would not be God's creatures; He therefore does not bid us cast them away as if they were bad, but distribute them; nor is any one condemned for possessing them, but for abusing them. And thus it is, that to lay out our goods according to God's command both blots out sins, and bestows the kingdom.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 22. in 1 ad Cor.) God might indeed feed the poor without our taking compassion upon them, but He wishes the givers to be bound by the ties of love to the receivers.

Basil. (in Reg. fus. disp. 3. ad int. 9.) When our Lord says, *Give to the poor*, it becomes a man no longer to be careless, but diligently to dispose of all things, first of all by himself if in any measure he is able, if not, by those who are known to be faithful, and prudent in their management; for *cursed is he who doeth the work of the Lord negligently.* (Jerem. 49:10.)

Chrysostom. (Hom. 32. in 1. ad Cor.) But it is asked, how does Christ acknowledge the giving all things to the poor to be perfection, whereas St. Paul declares this very thing without charity to be imperfect. Their harmony is shewn in the words which succeed, *And come, follow me*, which betokens it to be from love. *For herein shall all men know that ye are my, disciples, if ye have love one toward another.* (John 13:35.)

Theophylact. Together with poverty must exist all the other virtues, therefore He says, *Come, follow me*, that is, In all other things be My disciples, be always following Me.

Cyril of Alexandria. The ruler was not able to contain the new word, but being like an old bottle, burst with sorrow.

Basil. (Hom. de eleemos.) The merchant when he goes to the market, is not loth to, part with all that he has, in order to obtain what he requires, but thou art grieved at giving mere dust and ashes that thou mayest gain everlasting bliss.

18:24–30

24. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!

25. For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved?

27. And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.

28. Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed thee.

29. And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,

30. Who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.

Theophylact. Our Lord, seeing that the rich man was sorrowful when it was told him to surrender his riches, marvelled, saying, *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God*! He says not, It is impossible for them to enter, but it is difficult. For they might through their riches reap an heavenly reward, but it is a hard thing, seeing that riches are more tenacious than birdlime, and hardly is the soul ever plucked away, that is once seized by them. But he next speaks of it as impossible. *It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye.* The word in the Greek answers equally to the animal called the camel, and to a cable, or ship rope. However we may understand it, impossibility is implied. What must we say then? First of all that the thing is positively true, for we must remember that the rich man differs from the steward, or dispenser of riches. The rich man is he who reserves his riches to himself, the steward or dispenser one who holds them entrusted to his care for the benefit of others.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 24. in 1 ad Cor.) Abraham indeed possessed wealth for the poor. And all they who righteously possess it, spend it as receiving it from God, according to the divine command, while those who have acquired wealth in an ungodly way, are ungodly in their use of it; whether in squandering it on harlots or parasites, or hiding it in the ground, but sparing nothing for the poor. (Hom. 18. in Joan.). He does not then forbid men to be rich, but to be the slaves of their riches. He would have us use them as necessary, not keep guard over them. It is of a servant to guard, of a master to dispense. Had he wished to preserve them, He would never have given them to men, but left them to remain in the earth.

Theophylact. Again, observe that He says, a rich man can not possibly be saved, but one who possesses riches hardly; as if he said, The rich man who has been taken captive by his riches, and is a slave to them, shall not be saved; but he who possesses or is the master of them shall with difficulty be saved, because of human infirmity. For the devil is ever trying to make our foot slip as long as we possess riches, and it is a hard matter to escape his wiles. Poverty therefore is a blessing, and as it were free from temptation.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 80. in Matt.) There is no profit in riches while the soul suffers poverty, no hurt in poverty, while the soul abounds in wealth. But if the sign of a man waxing rich is to be in need of nothing, and of becoming poor to be in want, it is plain that the poorer a man is, the richer he grows. For it is far easier for one in poverty to despise wealth, than for the rich. Nor again is avarice wont to be satisfied by having more, for thereby are men only the more inflamed, just as a fire spreads, the more it has to feed upon. Those which seem to be the evils of poverty, it has in common with riches, but the evils of riches are peculiar to them.

Augustine. (de Quæst Evang. lib. ii. c. 42.) The name of "rich" he here gives to one who covets temporal things, and boasts himself in them. To such rich men are opposed the poor in spirit, of whom is the kingdom of heaven. Now mystically it is easier for Christ to suffer for the lovers of this world, than for the lovers of this world to be converted to Christ. For by the name of a camel He would represent Himself: for He voluntarily humbled Himself to bear the burdens of our infirmity. By the needle He signifies sharp piercings, and thereby the pangs received in His Passion, but by the form of the needle He describes the straitening of the Passion.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 63. in Matt.) These weighty words so far exceeded the capacity of the disciples, that when they heard them, they asked, *Who then can be saved?* not that they feared for themselves, but for the whole world.

Augustine. (ut sup.) Seeing that there is an incomparably greater number of poor which might be saved by forsaking their riches, they understood that all who love riches, even though they cannot obtain them, were to be counted among the number of the rich. It follows, *And he said to them, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God*, which must not be taken as if a rich man with covetousness and pride might enter into the kingdom of God, but that it is possible with God for a man to be converted from covetousness and pride, to charity and humility.

Theophylact. With men therefore whose thoughts creep earthward, salvation is impossible, but with God it is possible. For when man shall have God for his counsellor, and shall have received the righteousness of God and His teaching concerning poverty, as well as have invoked His aid, this shall be possible to him.

Cyril of Alexandria. The rich man who has despised many things will naturally expect a reward, but he who possessing little resigns what he has, may fairly ask what there is in store for him; as it follows, *Then Peter said, Lo, we have left all.* Matthew adds, *What shall we have therefore?* (Matt. 19:27.)

Bede. As if he says, We have done what Thou commandedst us, what reward then wilt Thou give us? And because it is not enough to have left all things, he adds that which made it perfect, saying, *And have followed thee.*

Cyril of Alexandria. It was necessary to say this, because those who forsake a few things, as far as regards their motives and obedience, are weighed in the same balance with the rich, who have forsaken all, inasmuch as they act from the like affections, in voluntarily making a surrender of all that they possess. And therefore it follows, *Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, &c. who shall not receive manifold more, &c.* He inspires all who hear Him with the most joyful hopes, confirming His promises to them with an oath, beginning His declaration with *Verily*. For when the divine teaching invites the world to the faith of Christ, some perhaps regarding their unbelieving parents are unwilling to distress them by coming to the faith, and have the like respect of others of their relations; while some again forsake their father and mother, and hold lightly the love of their whole kindred in comparison of the love of Christ.

Bede. The sense then is this; He who in seeking the kingdom of God has despised all earthly affections, has trampled under foot all riches, pleasures, and smiles of the world, shall receive far greater in the present time. Upon the ground of this declaration, some of the Jews build up the fable of a millennium after the resurrection of the just, when all things which we have given up for God's sake shall be restored with manifold interest, and eternal life be granted. Nor do they from their ignorance seem to be aware, that even if in other things there might be a fit promise of restoration, yet in the matter of wives, who might be according to some Evangelists an hundred fold, it would be manifestly shocking, especially since our Lord declares that in the resurrection there will be no marrying. And according to Mark, those things which have been given up, He declares shall be received at this time with persecutions, which these Jews assert will be absent for a thousand years.

Cyril of Alexandria. This then we say, that he who gives up all worldly and carnal things will gain for himself far greater, inasmuch as the Apostles, after leaving a few things, obtained the manifold gifts of grace, and were accounted great every where. We then shall be like to them. If a man has left his home, he shall receive an abiding place above. If his father, he shall have a Father in heaven. If he has forsaken his kindred, Christ shall take him for a brother. If he has given up a wife, he shall find divine wisdom, from which he shall beget spiritual offspring. If a mother, he shall find the heavenly Jerusalem, who is our mother. From brethren and sisters also united together with him by the spiritual bond of his will, he shall receive in this life far

more kindly affections.

18:31–34

31. Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished.

32. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on:

33. And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again.

34. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.

Gregory. (Hom. 2. in Ev.) The Saviour foreseeing that the hearts of His disciples would be troubled at His Passion, tells them long beforehand both the suffering of His Passion and the glory of His Resurrection.

Bede. And knowing that there would arise certain heretics, saying, that Christ taught things contrary to the Law and the Prophets, He shews already that the voices of the Prophets had proclaimed the accomplishment of His Passion, and the glory which should follow.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 65. in Matt.) He speaks with His disciples apart, concerning His Passion. For it was not fitting to publish this word to the multitudes, lest they should be troubled, but to His disciples He foretold it, that being habituated by expectation, they might be the more able to bear it.

Cyril of Alexandria. And to convince them that He foreknew His Passion, and of His own accord came to it, that they might not say, "How has He fallen into the hands of the enemy, who promised us salvation?" He relates in order the successive events of the Passion; *He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spitted on.*

Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Esaias prophesied of this when he said, *I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.* (Isa. 50:5.) The Prophet also foretold the crucifixion, saying, *He hath poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors*; (Isa. 53:12.) as it is said here, *And after they have scourged him, they shall put him to death.* But David foretold Christ's resurrection, *For thou shalt not leave my soul in hell*, (Ps. 16:10.) and so it is here added, *And on the third day he shall rise again.*

Isidore of Peleusium. (l. ii. Ep. 212.) I marvel at the folly of those who ask how Christ rose again before the three days. If indeed He rose later than he had foretold, it were a mark of weakness, but if sooner, a token of the highest power. For when we see a man who has promised his creditor that he will pay him his debt after three days, fulfilling his promise on that very day, we are so far from looking upon him as deceitful, that we admire his veracity. I must add, however, that He said not that He should rise again after three days, but on the third day. You have then the preparation, the Sabbath until sun set, and the fact that He rose after the Sabbath was over.

Cyril of Alexandria. The disciples did not as yet know exactly what the Prophets had foretold, but after He rose again, He opened their understanding that they should understand the Scriptures. (Luke 24:25.)

Bede. For because they desired His life above all things, they could not hear of His death, and as they knew him to be not only a spotless man, but also very God, they thought He could in no wise die. And whenever in the parables, which they frequently heard Him utter, He said any thing concerning His Passion, they believed it to be spoken allegorically, and referred to something else. Hence it follows, *And this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.* But the Jews, who conspired against His life, knew that He spoke concerning His Passion, when he said, *The Son of man must be lifted up*; therefore said they, *We have heard in our law that Christ abideth for ever, and how sayest thou the Son of man must be lifted up?*

18:35–43

35. And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging:

36. And hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant.

37. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.

38. And he cried, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

39. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

40. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him,

41. Saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.

42. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.

43. And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

Gregory. (Hom. 2. in Ev.) Because the disciples being yet carnal were unable to receive the words of mystery, they are brought to a miracle. Before their eyes a blind man receives his sight, that by a divine work their faith might be strengthened.

Theophylact. And to shew that our Lord did not even walk without doing good, He performed a miracle on the way, giving His disciples this example, that we should be profitable in all things, and that nothing in us should be in vain.

Augustine. We might understand the expression of being nigh to Jericho, as if they had already gone out of it, but were still near. It might, though less

common in this sense, be so taken here, since Matthew relates, that as they were going out of Jericho, two men received their sight who sat by the way side. There need be no question about the number, if we suppose that one of the Evangelists remembering only one was silent about the other. Mark also mentions only one, and he too says that he received his sight as they were going out of Jericho; he has given also the name of the man and of his father, to let us understand that this one was well known, but the other not so, so that it might come to pass that the one who was known would be naturally the only one mentioned. But seeing that what follows in St. Luke's Gospel most plainly proves the truth of his account, that while they were yet coming to Jericho, the miracle took place, we cannot but suppose that there were two such miracles, the first upon one blind man when our Lord was coming to that city, the second on two, when He was departing out of it; Luke relating the one, Matthew the other.

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (Hom. de cæco et Zacchæo) There was a great multitude gathered round Christ, and the blind man indeed knew Him not, but felt a drawing towards Him, and grasped with his heart what his sight embraced not. As it follows, *And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what it was*. And those that saw spoke indeed according to their own opinion. *And they told him that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by*. But the blind man cried out. He is told one thing, he proclaims another; for it follows, *And he cried out, saying, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me*. Who taught thee this, O man? Hast thou that art deprived of sight read books? Whence then knowest thou the Light of the world? *Verily the Lord giveth sight to the blind*. (Ps. 146:8.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Having been brought up a Jew, he was not ignorant that of the seed of David should God be born according to the flesh, and therefore he addresses Him as God, saying, *Have mercy upon me*. Would that those might imitate him who divide Christ into two. For he speaks of Christ as God, yet calls Him Son of David. But they marvel at the justice of his confession, and some even wished to prevent him from confessing his faith. But by checks of this kind his ardour was not damped. For faith is able to resist all, and to triumph over all. It is a good thing to lay aside shame in behalf of divine worship. For if for money's sake some are bold, is it not fitting when the soul is at stake, to put on a righteous boldness? As it follows, *But he cried out the more, Son of David, & c*. The voice of one invoking in faith stops Christ, for He looks back upon them who call upon Him in faith. And accordingly He calls the blind man to Him, and bids him draw nigh, that he in truth who had first laid hold on Him in faith, might approach Him also in the body. The Lord asks this blind man as he drew near, *What will thou that I shall do?* He asks the question purposely, not as ignorant, but that those who stood by might know that he sought not money, but divine power from God. And thus it follows, *But he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight*.

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (Chrys. ut sup.) Or because the Jews perverting the truth might say, as in the case of him who was born blind, *This is not he, but one like unto to him*, (John 9:8.) He wished the blind first to make manifest the infirmity of his nature, that then he might fully acknowledge the greatness of the grace bestowed upon him. And as soon as the blind man explained the nature of his request, with words of the highest authority He commanded him to see. As it follows, *And Jesus said to him, Receive thy sight*. This served only still more to increase the guilt of unbelief in the Jews. For what prophet ever spoke in this way? Observe moreover what the physician claims from him whom he has restored to health. *Thy faith hath saved thee*. For faith then mercies are sold. Where faith is willing to accept, there grace abounds. And as from the same fountain some in small vessels draw little water, while others in large draw much, the fountain knowing no difference in measure; and as according to the windows which are opened, the sun sheds more or less of its brightness within; so according to the measure of a man's motives does he draw down supplies of grace. The voice of Christ is changed into the light of the afflicted. For He was the Word of true light. And thus it follows, *And immediately he said*. But the blind man as before his restoration he shewed an earnest faith, so afterwards did he give plain tokens of his gratitude; *And he followed him, glorifying God*.

Cyril of Alexandria. From which it is clear, that he was released from a double blindness, both bodily and intellectual. For he would not have glorified Him as God, had he not truly seen Him as He is. But he also gave occasion to others to glorify God; as it follows, *And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God*.

Bede. Not only for the gift of light obtained, but for the merit of the faith which obtained it.

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (Chrys. ubi sup.) We may here well inquire, why Christ forbids the healed demoniac who wished to follow Him, but permits the blind man who had received his sight. There seems to be a good reason for both the one case and the other. He sends away the former as a kind of herald, to proclaim aloud by the evidence of his own state his benefactor, for it was indeed a notable miracle to see a raving madman brought to a sound mind. But the blind man He allows to follow Him, since He was going up to Jerusalem about to accomplish the high mystery of the Cross, that men having a recent report of a miracle might not suppose that He suffered so much from helplessness as from compassion.

Ambrose. In the blind man we have a type of the Gentile people, who have received by the Sacrament of our Lord the brightness of the light which they had lost. And it matters not whether the cure is conveyed in the case of one or two blind men, inasmuch as deriving their origin from Ham and Japhet, the sons of Noah, in the two blind men they put forward two authors of their race.

Gregory. (Hom. 2. in Ev.) Or, blindness is a symbol of the human race, which in our first parent knowing not the brightness of heavenly light, now suffers the darkness of his condemnation. Jericho is interpreted 'the moon,' whose monthly wanings represent the feebleness of our mortality. While then our Creator is drawing nigh to Jericho, the blind is restored to sight, because when God took upon Him the weakness of our flesh, the human race received back the light which it had lost. He then who is ignorant of this brightness of the everlasting light, is blind. But if he does no more than believe in the Redeemer who said, *I am the way, the truth, and the life*; (John 13:6.) he sits by the way side. If he both believes and prays that he may receive the everlasting light, he sits by the way side and begs. Those that went before Jesus, as He was coming, represent the multitude of carnal desires, and the busy crowd of vices which before that Jesus comes to our heart, scatter our thoughts, and disturb us even in our prayers. But the blind man cried out the more; for the more violently we are assailed by our restless thoughts, the more fervently ought we to give ourselves to prayer. As long as we still suffer our manifold fancies to trouble us in our prayers, we feel in some measure Jesus passing by. But when we are very stedfast in prayer, God is fixed in our heart, and the lost light is restored. Or to pass by is of man, to stand is of God. The Lord then passing by heard the blind man crying, standing still restored him to sight, for by His humanity in compassion to our blindness He has pity upon our cries, by the power of His divinity He pours upon us the light of His grace.

Now for this reason He asks what the blind man wished, that He might stir up his heart to prayer, for He wishes that to be sought in prayer, which He knows beforehand both that we seek and He grants.

Ambrose. Or, He asked the blind man to the end that we might believe, that without confession no man can be saved.

Gregory. (ubi sup.) The blind man seeks from the Lord not gold, but light. Let us then seek not for false riches, but for that light which together with the Angels alone we may see, the way whereunto is faith. Well then was it said to the blind, *Receive thy sight; thy faith hath saved thee*. He who sees, also follows, because the good which he understands he practises.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. qu. 48.) If we interpret Jericho to mean the moon, and therefore death, our Lord when approaching His death commanded the light of the Gospel to be preached to the Jews only, who are signified by that one blind man whom Luke speaks of, but rising again from the dead and ascending to heaven, to both Jews and Gentiles; and these two nations seem to be denoted by the two blind men whom Matthew mentions.

CHAP. 19

19:1–10

1. And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

2. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the Publicans, and he was rich.

3. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

6. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8. And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

9. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

Ambrose. Zacchæus in the sycamore, the blind man by the way side: upon the one our Lord waits to shew mercy, upon the other He confers the great glory of abiding in his house. The chief among the Publicans is here fitly introduced. For who will hereafter despair of himself, now that he attains to grace who gained his living by fraud. And he too moreover a rich man, that we may know that not all rich men are covetous.

Cyril of Alexandria. But Zacchæus made no delay in what he did, and so was accounted worthy of the favour of God, which gives sight to the blind, and calls them who are afar off.

Titus Bostrensis. The seed of salvation had begun to spring up in him, for he desired to see Jesus, having never seen Him. For if he had seen Him, he would long since have given up the Publican's wicked life. No one that sees Jesus can remain any longer in wickedness. But there were two obstacles to his seeing Him. The multitude not so much of men as of his sins prevented him, for he was little of stature.

Ambrose. What means the Evangelist by describing his stature, and that of none other? It is perhaps because he was young in wickedness, or as yet weak in the faith. For he was not yet prostrate in sin who could climb up. He had not yet seen Christ.

Titus Bostrensis. But he discovered a good device; running before he climbed up into a sycamore, and saw Him whom he had long wished for, i. e. Jesus, passing by. Now Zacchæus desired no more than to see, but He who is able to do more than we ask for, granted to Him far above what he expected; as it follows, *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him.* He saw the soul of the man striving earnestly to live a holy life, and converts him to godliness.

Ambrose. Uninvited he invites Himself to his house; as it follows, *Zacchæus, make haste, and come down, & c.* for He knew how richly He would reward his hospitality. And though He had not yet heard the word of invitation, He had already seen the will.

Bede. See here, the camel disencumbered of his hunch passes through the eye of a needle, that is, the rich man and the publican abandoning his love of riches, and loathing his dishonest gains, receives the blessing of his Lord's company. It follows, *And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

Ambrose. Let the rich learn that guilt attaches not to the goods themselves, but to those who know not how to use them. For riches, as they are hindrances to virtue in the unworthy, so are they means of advancing it in the good.

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (Hom. de cæc. et Zacc.) Observe the gracious kindness of the Saviour. The innocent associates with the guilty, the fountain of justice with covetousness, which is the source of injustice. Having entered the publican's house, He suffers no stain from the mists of avarice, but disperses them by the bright beam of His righteousness. But those who deal with biting words and reproaches, try to cast a slur upon the things which were done by Him; for it follows, *And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.* But He, though accused of being a wine-bibber and a friend of publicans, regarded it not, so long as He could accomplish His end. As a physician sometimes can not save his patients from their diseases without the defilement of blood. And so it happened here, for the publican was converted, and lived a better life. *Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any man, I restore him fourfold.* Behold here is a marvel: without learning he obeys. And as the sun pouring its rays into a house enlightens it not by word, but by work, so the Saviour by the rays of righteousness put to flight the darkness of sin; for the light shineth in darkness. Now every thing united is strong, but divided, weak; therefore Zacchæus divides into two parts his substance. But we must be careful to observe, that his wealth was not made up from unjust gains,

but from his patrimony, else how could he restore fourfold what he had unjustly extorted. He knew that the law ordered what was wrongly taken away to be restored fourfold, that if the law deterred not, a man's losses might soften him. Zacchæus waits not for the judgment of the law, but makes himself his own judge.

Theophylact. If we examine more closely, we shall see that nothing was left of his own property. For having given half of his goods to the poor, out of the remainder he restored fourfold to those whom he had injured. He not only promised this, but did it. For he says not, "I will give the half, and I will restore fourfold, but, *I give*, and *I restore*. To such Christ announces salvation; *Jesus saith unto him, This day is salvation come to this house*, signifying that Zacchæus had attained to salvation, meaning by the house the inhabitant thereof. And it follows, *forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham*. For He would not have given the name of a son of Abraham to a lifeless building.

Bede. Zacchæus is called the son of Abraham, not because he was born of Abraham's seed, but because he imitates his faith, that as Abraham left his country and his father's house, so he abandoned all his goods in giving them to the poor. And He well says, "He also," to declare that not only those who had lived justly, but those who are raised up from a life of injustice, belong to the sons of promise.

Theophylact. He said not that he "was" a son of Abraham, but that he now is. For before when he was the chief among the publicans, and bore no likeness to the righteous Abraham, he was not his son. But because some murmured that he tarried with a man who was a sinner, he adds in order to restrain them, *For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost*.

Pseudo-Chrysostom. (ubi sup.) Why do ye accuse me if I bring sinners to righteousness? So far am I from hating them, that for their sakes I came. For I came to heal, not to judge, therefore am I the constant guest of those that are sick, and I suffer their noisomeness that I may supply remedies. But some one may ask, how does Paul bid us, *If we have a brother that is a fornicator or covetous man, with such not even to take food*; (1 Cor. 5:11.) whereas Christ was the guest of publicans? They were not as yet so far advanced as to be brethren, and besides, St. Paul bids us avoid our brethren only when they persist in evil, but these were converted.

Bede. Mystically, Zacchæus, which is by interpretation "justified," signifies the Gentile believers, who were depressed and brought very low by their worldly occupations, but sanctified by God. And he was desirous to see our Saviour entering Jericho, inasmuch as he sought to share in that faith which Christ brought into the world.

Cyril of Alexandria. The crowd is the tumultuous state of an ignorant multitude, which cannot see the lofty top of wisdom. Zacchæus therefore, while he was in the crowd, saw not Christ, but having advanced beyond the vulgar ignorance, was thought worthy to entertain Him, whom he desired to look upon.

Bede. Or the crowd, that is, the general habit of vice, which rebuked the blind man crying out, lest he should seek the light, also impedes Zacchæus looking up, that he might not see Jesus; that as by crying out the more the blind man overcame the crowd, so the man weak in the faith by forsaking earthly things, and climbing the tree of the Cross, surmounts the opposing multitude. The sycamore, which is a tree resembling the mulberry in foliage, but exceeding it in height, whence by the Latins it is called "lofty," is called the "foolish fig-tree;" and so the Cross of our Lord sustains believers, as the fig-tree figs, and is mocked by unbelievers as foolishness. This tree Zacchæus, who was little in stature, climbed up, that he might be raised together with Christ; for every one who is humble, and conscious of his own weakness, cries out, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ*. (Gal. 6:14.)

Ambrose. He has well added, that our Lord was to pass *that* way, either where the sycamore-tree was, or where he was who was about to believe, that so He might preserve the mystery, and sow the seeds of grace. For He had so come as that through the Jews He came to the Gentiles. He sees then Zacchæus above, for already the excellence of his faith shone forth amidst the fruits of good works, and the loftiness of the fruitful tree; but Zacchæus stands out above the tree, as one who is above the law.

Bede. The Lord as He journeyed came to the place where Zacchæus had climbed the sycamore, for having sent His preachers throughout the world in whom He Himself spoke and went, He comes to the Gentile people, who were already raised up on high through faith in His Passion, and whom when He looked up He saw, for He chose them through grace. Now our Lord once abode in the house of the chief of the Pharisees, but when He did works such as none but God could do, they railed at Him. Wherefore hating their deeds He departed, saying, *Your house shall be left unto you desolate;* (Matt. 23:38.) but now He must needs stay at the house of the weak Zacchæus, that is, by the grace of the new law brightly shining, He must take rest in the hearts of the lowly nations. But that Zacchæus is bid to come down from the sycamore tree, and prepare an abode for Christ, this is what the Apostle says, *Yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more*. (2 Cor. 5:16.) And again elsewhere, *For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God*. (2 Cor. 13:4.) It is plain that the Jews always hated the salvation of the Gentiles; but salvation, which formerly filled the houses of the Jews, has this day shone upon the Gentiles, forasmuch as this people also by believing on God is a son of Abraham.

Theophylact. It is easy to turn this to a moral use. For whoever surpasses many in wickedness is small in spiritual growth, and cannot see Jesus for the crowd. For disturbed by passion and worldly things, he beholds not Jesus walking, that is, working in us, not recognising His operation. But he climbs up to the top of a sycamore-tree, in that he rises above the sweetness of pleasure, which is signified by a fig, and subduing it, and so becoming more exalted, he sees and is seen by Christ.

Gregory. (Mor. 27. c. 46.) Or because the sycamore is from its name called the foolish fig, the little Zacchæus gets up into the sycamore and sees the Lord, for they who humbly choose the foolish things of this world are those who contemplate most closely the wisdom of God. For what is more foolish in this world than not to seek for what is lost, to give our possessions to robbers, to return not injury for injury? However, by this wise foolishness, the wisdom of God is seen, not yet really as it is, but by the light of contemplation.

Theophylact. The Lord said to him, *Make haste and come down*, that is, "Thou hast ascended by penitence to a place too high for thee, come down by humility, lest thy exaltation cause thee to slip. I must abide in the house of a humble man. We have two kinds of goods in us, bodily, and spiritual; the just man gives up all his bodily goods to the poor, but he forsakes not his spiritual goods, but if he has extorted any thing from any one, he restores to him fourfold; signifying thereby that if a man by repentance walks in the opposite path to his former perverseness, he by the manifold practice of virtue heals all his old offences, and so merits salvation, and is called the son of Abraham, because he went out from his own kindred, that is, from his ancient wickedness.

11. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

15. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

20. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:

23. Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24. And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26. For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

Eusebius. There were some who thought that our Saviour's kingdom would commence at His first coming, and they were expecting it shortly to appear when He was preparing to go up to Jerusalem; so astonished were they by the divine miracles which He did. He therefore informs them, that He should not receive the kingdom from His Father until He had left mankind to go to His Father.

Theophylact. The Lord points out the vanity of their imaginations, for the senses cannot embrace the kingdom of God; He also plainly shews to them, that as God He knew their thoughts, putting to them the following parable, *A certain nobleman, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. This parable is intended to set before us the mysteries of Christ from the first to the last. For God was made man, who was the Word from the beginning; and though He became a servant, yet was He noble because of His unspeakable birth from the Father.

Basil. (in Esai. c. 13. 13.) Noble, not only in respect of His Godhead, but of His manhood, being sprung from the seed of David according to the flesh. He went into a far country, separated not so much by distance of place as by actual condition. For God Himself is nigh to every one of us, when our good works bind us to Him. And He is afar off, as often as by cleaving to destruction, we remove ourselves away from Him. To this earthly country then He came at a distance from God, that He might receive the kingdom of the Gentiles, according to the Psalm, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.* (Ps. 2:8.)

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 40.) Or the far country is the Gentile Church, extending to the uttermost parts of the earth. For He went that the fulness of the Gentiles might come in; He will return that all Israel may be saved.

Eusebius. Or by His setting out into a far country, He denotes His own ascension from earth to heaven. But when He adds, *To receive for himself a kingdom, and to return*; He points out His second appearance, when He shall come as a King and in great glory. He first of all calls Himself a man, because of His nativity in the flesh, then noble; not yet a King, because as yet at His first appearance He exercised no kingly power. It is also well said to obtain for Himself a kingdom, according to Daniel, *Behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and a kingdom was given to him.* (Dan. 7:13.)

Cyril of Alexandria. *For ascending up to heaven, He sits on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* (Heb. 1:3.) But being ascended, He hath dispensed to those that believe on Him different divine graces, as unto the servants were committed their Lord's goods, that gaining something they might bring him token of their service. As it follows, *And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds.*

Chrysostom. Holy Scripture is accustomed to use the number ten as a sign of perfection, for if any one wishes to count beyond it, he has again to begin from unity, having in ten as it were arrived at a goal. And so in the giving of the talents, the one who reaches the goal of divine obedience is said to have received ten pounds.

Augustine. (ut sup.) Or by the ten pounds he signifies the law, because of the ten commandments, and by the ten servants, those to whom while under the law grace was preached. For so we must interpret the ten pounds given them for trading, seeing that they understood the law, when its veil was removed,

to belong to the Gospel.

Bede. A pound which the Greeks call μνᾶ is equal in weight to a hundred drachmas, and every word of Scripture, as suggesting to us the perfection of the heavenly life, shines as it were with the greatness of the hundredth number.

Eusebius. By those then who receive the pounds, He means His disciples, giving a pound to each, since He entrusts to all an equal stewardship; He bade them put it out to use, as it follows, *Occupy till I come.* Now there was no other employment but to preach the doctrine of His kingdom to those who would hear it. But there is one and the same doctrine for all, one faith, one baptism. And therefore is one pound given to each.

Cyril of Alexandria. But greatly indeed do these differ from those who denied the kingdom of God, of whom it is added, *But his citizens hated him.* And this it is for which Christ upbraided the Jews, when He said, *But now have they both seen and hated me and my Father.* (John 15:24.) But they rejected His kingdom, saying to Pilate, *We have no king but Cæsar.* (John 19:15.)

Eusebius. By *citizens* He signifies the Jews, who were sprung from the same lineage according to the flesh, and with whom He joined in the customs of the law.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. ut sup.) And they sent a message after Him, because after His resurrection also, they persecuted His Apostles, and refused the preaching of the Gospel.

Eusebius. After our Saviour had instructed them in the things belonging to His first coming, He proceeds to set forth His second coming with majesty and great glory, saying, *And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 39. in 1. ad Cor.) Holy Scripture notes two kingdoms of God, one indeed by creation, since by right of creation He is King over all men; the other by justification, since He reigns over the just, of their own will made subject to Him. And this is the kingdom which He is here said to have received.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. ut sup.) He also returns after having received His kingdom, because in all glory will He come who appeared lowly to them to whom He said, *My kingdom is not of this world.* (John 18:36.)

Cyril of Alexandria. But when Christ returns, having taken unto Himself His kingdom, the ministers of the word will receive their deserved praises and delight in heavenly rewards, because they multiplied their talent by acquiring more talents, as it is added, *Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound has gained ten pounds.*

Bede. The first servant is the order of teachers sent to the circumcision, who received one pound to put out to use, inasmuch as it was ordered to preach one faith. But this one pound gained ten pounds, because by its teaching it united to itself the people who were subject to the law. It follows, *And he said unto him, Well done, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, &c.* The servant is faithful in a very little who does not adulterate the word of God. For all the gifts we receive now are but small in comparison of what we shall have.

Greek Expositor. (Evagrius.) Because he receives the reward of his own good works, he is said to be set over ten cities. And some conceiving unworthily of these promises imagine that they themselves are preferred to magistracies and chief places in the earthly Jerusalem, which is built with precious stones, because they have had their conversation honest in Christ; so little do they purge their soul of all hankering after power and authority among men.

Ambrose. But the ten cities are the souls over whom he is rightly placed who has deposited in the minds of men his Lord's money and the holy words, which are tried as silver is tried in the fire. For as Jerusalem is said to be built as a city, (Ps. 121:3.) so are peace-making souls. And as angels have rule, so have they who have acquired the life of angels.

It follows, *And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound has gained five pounds.*

Bede. That servant is the assembly of those who were sent to preach the Gospel to the uncircumcision, whose pound, that is the faith of the Gospel, gained five pounds, because it converted to the grace of Evangelical faith, the nations before enslaved to the five senses of the body. *And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities*; that is, be exalted to shine through the faith and conversation of those souls which thou hast enlightened.

Ambrose. Or perhaps differently; he who gained five pounds has all the moral virtues, for there are five senses of the body. He who gained ten has so much more, that is to say, the mysteries of the law as well as the moral virtues. The ten pounds may also here be taken to mean the ten words, that is, the teaching of the law; the five pounds, the ordering of discipline. *But the scribe must be perfect in all things.* And rightly, since He is speaking of the Jews, are there two only who bring their pounds multiplied, not indeed by a gainful interest of money, but a profitable stewardship of the Gospel. For there is one kind of usury in money lent on interest, another in heavenly teaching.

Chrysostom. For in earthly wealth it does not belong to one man to be made rich without another being made poor, but in spiritual riches, without his making another rich also. For in earthly matters participation lessens, in spiritual it increases wealth.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Evan. lib. ii. qu. 46.) Or else; That one of those who well employed their money gained ten pounds, another five, signifies that they acquired them for the flock of God, by whom the law was now understood through grace, either because of the ten commandments of the law, or because he, through whom the law was given, wrote five books; and to this belong the ten and five cities over which He appoints them to preside. For the manifold meanings or interpretations which spring up concerning some individual precept or book, when reduced and brought together in one, make as it were a city of living eternal reasons. Hence a city is not a multitude of living creatures, but of reasonable beings bound together by the fellowship of one law. The servants then who bring an account of that which they had received, and are praised for having gained more, represent those giving in their account who have well employed what they had received, to increase their Lord's riches by those who believe on Him, while they who are unwilling to do this are signified by that servant who kept his pound laid up in a napkin; of whom it follows, *And the third came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin, &c.* For there are some who flatter themselves with this delusion, saying, It is enough for each individual to answer concerning himself, what need then of others to preach and minister, in order that every one should be compelled also to give an account of himself, seeing that in the Lord's sight even they are without excuse to whom the law was not given, and who were not asleep at the time of the preaching of the Gospel, for they might have known the Creator through the creature; and then it follows, *For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man, &c.* For this is, as it were, to reap when he did not sow, that is, to hold those guilty of ungodliness to whom this word of the law or the Gospel was not preached, and avoiding as it were this peril of judgment, with slothful toil they rest from the ministration of the word. And this it is to tie

up in a napkin what they had received.

Theophylact. For with a napkin the face of the dead is covered; well then is this idler said to have wrapped up his pound in a napkin, because leaving it dead and unprofitable he neitheir touched nor increased it.

Bede. Or to tie up money in a napkin is to hide the gifts we have received under the indolence of a sluggish body. But that which he thought to have used as an excuse is turned to his own blame, as it follows, *He says unto him, Out of thy own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.* He is called a wicked servant, as being slothful in business, and proud in questioning his Lord's judgment. *Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest thou not my money into the bank?* As though he said, If thou knewest me to be a hard man, and a seeker of what is not mine own, why did not the thought of this strike thee with terror, that thou mightest be sure that I would require mine own with strictness?

But money or silver is the preaching of the Gospel and the word of God, for the words of the Lord are pure words *as silver tried in the fire.* (Ps. 12:6.) And this word of the Lord ought to be given to the bank, that is, put into hearts meet and ready to receive it.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. ubi sup.) Or the bank into which the money was to be given, we take to be the very profession of religion which is publicly put forth as a means necessary to salvation.

Chrysostom. In the payment of earthly riches the debtors are obliged only to strictness. Whatever they receive, so much must they return, nothing more is required of them. But with regard to the words of God, we are not only bound diligently to keep, but we are commanded to increase; and hence it follows, *that at my coming I might have required the same with usury.*

Bede. For they who by faith receive the riches of the word from a teacher, must by their works pay it back with usury, or be earnestly desirous to know something more than what they have as yet learnt from the mouth of their preachers.

Cyril of Alexandria. It is the work of teachers to engraft in their hearers' minds wholesome and profitable words, but of divine power to win the hearers to obedience, and render their understanding fruitful. Now this servant, so far from being commended or thought worthy of honour, was condemned as slothful, as it follows, *And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give to him that hath ten pounds.*

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. qu. 46.) Signifying thereby that both he will lose the gift of God, who having, hath not, that is, useth it not, and that he will have it increased, who having, hath, that is, rightly useth it.

Bede. The mystical meaning I suppose is this, that at the coming in of the Gentiles all Israel shall be saved, (Rom. 11:26.) and that then the abundant grace of the Spirit will be poured out upon the teachers.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 43. in Act.) He says then to them that stood by, *Take from him the pound*, because it is not the part of a wise man to punish, but he needs some one else as the minister of the judge in executing punishment. For even God does not Himself inflict punishment, but through the ministry of His angels.

Ambrose. Nothing is said of the other servants, who like wasteful debtors lost all that they had received. By those two servants who gained by trading, are signified that small number, who in two companies were sent as dressers of the vineyard; by the remainder all the Jews. It follows, *And they said unto him, Lord, he has ten pounds.* And lest this should seem unjust, it is added, *For to every one that hath, it shall be given.*

Theophylact. For seeing that he gained ten, by multiplying his pound tenfold, it is plain that by having more to multiply, he would be an occasion of greater gain to his Lord. But from the slothful and idle, who stirs not himself to increase what he has received, shall be taken away even that which he possesses, that there may be no gap in the Lord's account when it is given to others and multiplied. But this is not to be applied only to the words of God and teaching, but also to the moral virtues; for in respect of these also, God sends us His gracious gifts, endowing one man with fasting, another with prayer, another with mildness or humility; but all these so long as we watch strictly over ourselves we shall multiply, but if we grow cold we shall extinguish. He adds of His adversaries, *But those mine enemies who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Whereby He describes the ungodliness of the Jews who refused to be converted to Him.

Theophylact. Whom he will deliver to death, casting them into the outer fire. But even in this world they were most miserably slain by the Roman army.

Chrysostom. These things are of force against the Marcionists. For Christ also says, *Bring hither my enemies, and slay them before me.* (Mat. 21:41). Whereas they say Christ indeed is good, but the God of the Old Testament evil. Now it is plain that both the Father and the Son do the same things. For the Father sends His army to the vineyard, and the Son causes His enemies to be slain before Him.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 78. in Matt. Mat. 25.) This parable as it is related in Luke is different from that given in Matthew concerning the talents. For in the former indeed out of one and the same principal there were different sums produced, seeing that from the profits of one pound received, one servant brought five, another ten pounds. But with Matthew it is very different. For he who received two pounds, thereto added two more. He who received five, gained as much again. So the rewards given are unlike also.

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28. And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29. And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

30. Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.

31. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

32. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34. And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

36. And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

Titus Bostrensis. Because the Lord had said, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*, they that saw Him going up to Jerusalem thought that He was going then to commence the kingdom of God. When then the parable was finished in which He reproved the error above mentioned, and shewed plainly that He had not yet vanquished that death which was plotting against him, he proceeded forth to His passion, going up to Jerusalem.

Bede. Proving at the same time that the parable had been pronounced concerning the end of that city which was about both to slay Him, and to perish itself by the scourge of the enemy. It follows, *And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage, &c.* Bethphage was a small village belonging to the priests on Mount Olivet. Bethany was also a little town or hamlet on the side of the same mountain, about fifteen stades from Jerusalem.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 66. in Matt.) At the beginning of His ministry our Lord shewed Himself indifferent to the Jews, but when He had given sufficient token of His power, He transacts every thing with the highest authority. Many are the miracles which then took place. He foretold to them, ye shall find an unbroken colt. He foretels also that no one should hinder them, but as soon as they heard it, should hold their peace.

Titus Bostrensis. Here it was evident that there would be a divine summons. For no one can resist God calling for what is His own. But the disciples when ordered to fetch the colt refused not the office as a slight one, but went to bring him.

Basil. So likewise should we set about even the lowest works with the greatest zeal and affection, knowing that whatever is done with God before our eyes is not slight, but meet for the kingdom of heaven.

Titus Bostrensis. They who had tied the ass are struck dumb, because of the greatness of His mighty power, and are unable to resist the words of the Saviour; for "the Lord" is a name of majesty, and as a King was He about to come in the sight of all the people.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. lib. ii. cap. 66.) Nor matters it that Matthew speaks of an ass and its foal, while the others say nothing of the ass; for when both may be conceived, there is no variance even though one relate one thing, and another another, much less where one relates one thing, another both.

Gloss. (non occ.) The disciples waited upon Christ not only in bringing the colt of another, but also with their own garments, some of which they placed upon the ass, others they strewed in the way.

Bede. According to the other Evangelists, not the disciples only, but very many also out of the crowds scattered their garments in the way.

Ambrose. Mystically, our Lord came to Mount Olivet, that he might plant new olive trees on the heights of virtue. And perhaps the mountain itself is Christ, for who else could bear such fruit of olives abounding in the fulness of the Spirit?

Bede. Rightly are the towns described as placed on Mount Olivet, that is, on the Lord Himself, who rekindles the unction of spiritual graces with the light of knowledge and piety.

Origen. Bethany is interpreted, the house of obedience, but Bethphage the house of cheek bones, being a place belonging to the priests, for cheek bones in the sacrifices were the right of the priests, as it is commanded in the law. To that place then where obedience is, and where the priests have the possession, our Saviour sends His disciples to loose the ass's colt.

Ambrose. For they were in the village, and the colt was tied with its mother, nor could it be loosed except by the command of the Lord. The apostle's hand looses it. Such was the act, such the life, such the grace. Be such, that thou mayest be able to loose those that are bound. In the ass indeed Matthew represented the mother of error, but in the colt Luke has described the general character of the Gentile people. And rightly, *whereon yet never man sat*, for none before Christ called the nations of the Gentiles into the Church. But this people was tied and bound by the chains of iniquity, being subject to an unjust master, the servant of error, and could not claim to itself authority whom not nature but crime had made guilty. Since *the Lord* is spoken of, one master is recognised. O wretched bondage under a doubtful mastery! For he has many masters who has not one. Others bind that they may possess, Christ looses that he may keep, for He knew that gifts are more powerful than chains.

Origen. There were then many masters of this colt, before that the Saviour had need of him. But as soon as He began to be the master, there ceased to be any other. For no one can serve God and mammon. (Matt. 6:24.) When we are the servants of wickedness we are subject to many vices and passions, but the Lord has need of the colt, because He would have us loosed from the chain of our sins.

Origen. (sup. Joan. tom. ii.) Now I think this place is not without reason said to be a small village. For as if it were a village without any further name, in comparison of the whole earth the whole heavenly country is despised.

Ambrose. Nor is it for nothing that two disciples are directed thither; Peter to Cornelius, Paul to the rest. And therefore He did not mark out the persons, but determined the number. Still should any one require the persons, he may believe it to be spoken of Philip, whom the Holy Spirit sent to Gaza, when he baptized the eunuch of Queen Candace. (Acts 8:38.)

Theophylact. Or the two sent imply this, that the Prophets and Apostles make up the two steps to the bringing in of the Gentiles, and their subjection to Christ. But they bring the colt from a certain village, that it may be known to us that this people was rude and unlearned.

Cyril of Alexandria. Those men who were directed, when they were loosing the colt, did not use their own words, but spoke as Jesus had told them, that you may know that not by their own words, but the word of God, not in their own name but in Christ's, they implanted the faith among the Gentile nations; and by the command of God the hostile powers ceased, which claimed to themselves the obedience of the Gentiles.

Origen. (in Luc. 37.) The disciples next place their garments upon the ass, and cause the Saviour to sit thereon, inasmuch as they take upon themselves the word of God, and make it to rest upon the souls of their hearers. They divest themselves of their garments, and strew them in the way, for the clothing of the Apostles is their good works. And truly does the ass loosened by the disciples and carrying Jesus, walk upon the garments of the Apostles, when it imitates their doctrine. Which of us is so blessed, that Jesus should rest upon him?

Ambrose. For it pleased not the Lord of the world to be borne upon the ass's back, save that in a hidden mystery by a more inward sitting, the mystical Ruler might take His seat in the secret depths of men's souls, guiding the footsteps of the mind, bridling the wantonness of the heart. His word is a rein, His word is a goad.

19:37–40

37. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38. Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

40. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out

Origen. As long as our Lord was in the mount His Apostles only were with Him, but when He began to be near the descent, then there came to Him a multitude of the people.

Theophylact. He calls by the name of disciples not only the twelve, or the seventy-two, but all who followed Christ, whether for the sake of the miracles, or from a certain charm in His teaching, and to them may be added the children, as the other Evangelists relate. Hence it follows, *For all the mighty works which they had seen.*

Bede. They beheld indeed many of our Lord's miracles, but marvelled most at the resurrection of Lazarus. For as John says, *For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.* For it must be observed that this was not the first time of our Lord's coming to Jerusalem, but He came often before, as John relates.

Ambrose. The multitude then acknowledging God, proclaims Him King, repeats the prophecy, and declares that the expected Son of David according to the flesh had come, saying, *Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

Bede. That is, in the name of God the Father, although it might be taken "in His own name," since He Himself is the Lord. But His own words are better guides to the meaning when He says, *I am come in my Father's name.* For Christ is the Master of humility. Christ is not called King as one who exacts tribute, or arms His forces with the sword, or visibly crushes His enemies, but because He rules men's minds, and brings them believing, hoping, and loving into the kingdom of heaven. For He was willing to be King of Israel, to shew His compassion, not to increase His power. But because Christ appeared in the flesh, as the redemption and light of the whole world, well do both the heaven and earth, each in their turn, chaunt His praises. When He is born into the world, the heavenly hosts sing; when He is about to return to heaven, men send back their note of praise. As it follows, *Peace in heaven.*

Theophylact. That is, the ancient warfare, wherein we were at enmity against God, has ceased. *And glory in the highest*, inasmuch as Angels are glorifying God for such a reconciliation. For this very thing, that God visibly walks in the land of His enemies, shews that He has peace with us. But the Pharisees when they heard that the crowd called Him King, and praised Him as God, murmured, imputing the name of King to sedition, the name of God to blasphemy. *And some of the Pharisees said, Master, rebuke thy disciples.*

Bede. O the strange folly of the envious; they scruple not to call Him Master, because they knew He taught the truth, but His disciples, as though themselves were better taught, they deem worthy of rebuke.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the Lord forbade not them that glorified Him as God, but rather forbade those that blamed them, so bearing witness to Himself concerning the glory of the Godhead. Hence it follows, *He answered and said unto them, I tell you, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.*

Theophylact. As if He said, Not without cause do men praise me thus, but being constrained by the mighty works which they have seen.

Bede. And so at the crucifixion of our Lord, when His kinsfolk were silent from fear, the stones and rocks sang forth, while after that He gave up the ghost, the earth was moved, and the rocks were rent, and the graves opened.

Ambrose. Nor is it wonderful that the stones against their nature should chaunt forth the praises of the Lord, whom His murderers, harder than the rocks, proclaim aloud, that is, the multitude, in a little while about to crucify their God, denying Him in their hearts, whom with their mouths they confess. Or perhaps it is said, because, when the Jews were struck silent after the Lord's Passion, the living stones, as Peter calls them, (1 Pet. 2:5.) were about to cry out.

Origen. When we also are silent, (that is, when the love of many waxeth cold,) the stones cry out, for God can from stones raise up children to Abraham.

Ambrose. Rightly we read that the crowds praising God met Him at the descent of the mountain, that they might signify that the works of the heavenly mystery had come to them from heaven.

Bede. Again, when our Lord descends from the mount of Olives, the multitude descend also, because since the Author of mercy has suffered humiliation, it is necessary that all those who need His mercy should follow His footsteps.

19:41–44

41. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

42. Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44. And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou

knewest not the time of thy visitation.

Origen. All the blessings which Jesus pronounced in His Gospel He confirms by His own example, as having declared, *Blessed are the meek*; He afterwards sanctions it by saying, *Learn of me, for I am meek*; and because He had said, *Blessed are they that weep*, He Himself also wept over the city.

Cyril of Alexandria. For Christ had compassion upon the Jews, who wills that all men should be saved. Which had not been plain to us, were it not revealed by a certain mark of His humanity. For tears poured forth are the tokens of sorrow.

Gregory. (Hom. 39. in Ev.) The merciful Redeemer wept then over the fall of the false city, which that city itself knew not was about to come upon it. As it is added, *saying, If thou hadst known, even thou* (we may here understand) *wouldest weep*. Thou who now rejoicest, for thou knowest not what is at hand. It follows, *at least in this thy day*. For when she gave herself up to carnal pleasures, she had the things which in her day might be her peace. But why she had present goods for her peace, is explained by what follows, *But now they are hidden from thy eyes*. For if the eyes of her heart had not been hidden from the future evils which were hanging over her, she would not have been joyful in the prosperity of the present. Therefore He shortly added the punishment which was near at hand, saying, *For the days shall come upon thee*.

Cyril of Alexandria. *If thou hadst known, even thou.* The Jews were not worthy to receive the divinely inspired Scriptures, which relate the mystery of Christ. For as often as Moses is read, a veil overshadows their heart that they should not see what has been accomplished in Christ, who being the truth puts to flight the shadow. And because they regarded not the truth, they rendered themselves unworthy of the salvation which flows from Christ.

Eusebius. He here declares that His coming was to bring peace to the whole world. For unto this He came, that He should preach both to them that were near, and those that were afar off. But as they did not wish to receive the peace that was announced to them, it was hid from them. And therefore the siege which was shortly to come upon them He most expressly foretells, adding, *For the days shall come upon thee, &c.*

Gregory. (ut sup.) By these words the Roman leaders are pointed out. For that overthrow of Jerusalem is described, which was made by the Roman emperors Vespasian and Titus.

Eusebius. But how these things were fulfilled we may gather from what is delivered to us by Josephus, who though he was a Jew, related each event as it toot place, in exact accordance with Christ's prophecies.

Gregory. This too which is added, namely, *They shall not leave in thee one stone upon another*, is now witnessed in the altered situation of the same city, which is now built in that place where Christ was crucified without the gate, whereas the former Jerusalem, as it is called, was rooted up from the very foundation. And the crime for which this punishment of overthrow was inflicted is added, *Because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.*

Theophylact. That is, *of my coming*. For I came to visit and to save thee, which if thou hadst known and believed on Me, thou mightest have been reconciled to the Romans, and exempted from all danger, as did those who believed on Christ.

Origen. I do not deny then that the former Jerusalem was destroyed because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, but I ask whether the weeping might not perhaps concern this your spiritual Jerusalem. For if a man has sinned after receiving the mysteries of truth, he will be wept over. Moreover, no Gentile is wept over, but he only who was of Jerusalem, and has ceased to be.

Gregory. (ut sup.) For our Redeemer does not cease to weep through His elect whenever he perceives any to have departed from a good life to follow evil ways. Who if they had known their own damnation, hanging over them, would together with the elect shed tears over themselves. But the corrupt soul here has its day, rejoicing in the passing time; to whom things present are its peace, seeing that it takes delight in that which is temporal. It shuns the foresight of the future which may disturb its present mirth; and hence it follows, *But now are they hid from thine eyes*.

Origen. But our Jerusalem is also wept over, because after sin enemies surround it, (that is, wicked spirits,) and cast a trench round it to besiege it, and leave not a stone behind; especially when a man after long continency, after years of chastity, is overcome, and enticed by the blandishments of the flesh, has lost his fortitude and his modesty, and has committed fornication, they will not leave on him one stone upon another, according to Ezekiel, *His former righteousness I will not remember.* (Ezek 18:24.)

Gregory. (Hom. 39. in Ev.) Or else; The evil spirits lay siege to the soul, as it goes forth from the body, for being seized with the love of the flesh, they caress it with delusive pleasures. They surround it with a trench, because bringing all its wickedness which it has committed before the eyes of its mind, they close confine it to the company of its own damnation, that being caught in the very extremity of life, it may see by what enemies it is blockaded, yet be unable to find any way of escape, because it can no longer do good works, since those which it might once have done it despised. On every side also they inclose the soul when its iniquities rise up before it, not only in deed but also in word and thought, that she who before in many ways greatly enlarged herself in wickedness, should now at the end be straitened every way in judgment. Then indeed the soul by the very condition of its guilt is laid prostrate on the ground, while its flesh which it believed to be its life is bid to return to dust. Then its children fall in death, when all unlawful thoughts which only proceed from it, are in the last punishment of life scattered abroad. These may also be signified by the stones. For the corrupt mind when to a corrupt thought it adds one more corrupt, places one stone upon another. But when the soul is led to its doom, the whole structure of its thoughts is rent asunder. But the wicked soul God ceases not to visit with His teaching, sometimes with the scourge and sometimes with a miracle; that the truth which it knew not it may hear, and though still despising it, may return pricked to the heart in sorrow, or overcome with mercies may be ashamed at the evil which it has done. But because it knows not the time of its visitation, at the end of life it is given over to its enemies, that with them it may be joined together in the bond of everlasting damnation.

19:45–48

45. And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

46. Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47. And he taught daily in the temple. But the Chief Priests and the Scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

48. And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

Gregory. (ut sup.) When He had related the evils that were to come upon the city, He straightway entered the temple, that He might cast out them that bought and sold in it. Shewing that the destruction of the people arose chiefly from the guilt of the priests.

Ambrose. For God wishes not His temple to be a house of traffic, but the dwelling-place of holiness, nor does He fix the priestly service in a saleable performance of religion, but in a free and willing obedience.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now there were in the temple a number of sellers who sold animals, by the custom of the law, for the sacrificial victims, but the time was now come for the shadows to pass away, and the truth of Christ to shine forth. Therefore Christ, who together with the Father was worshipped in the temple, commanded the customs of the law to be reformed, but the temple to become a house of prayer; as it is added, *My house, &c.*

Gregory. For they who sat in the temple to receive money would doubtless sometimes make exaction to the injury of those who gave them none.

Theophylact. The same thing our Lord did also at the beginning of His preaching, as John relates; and now He did it a second time, because the crime of the Jews was much increased by their not having been chastened by the former warning.

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. lib. ii. qu. 48.) Now mystically, you must understand by the temple Christ Himself, as man in His human nature, or with His body united to Him, that is, the Church. But inasmuch as He is the Head of the Church, it was said, *Destroy this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.* (John 2:19.) Inasmuch as the Church is joined to Him, is the temple so interpreted, of which He seems to have spoken in the same place, *Take these away from hence*; signifying that there would be those in the Church who would rather be pursuing their own interest, or find a shelter therein to conceal their wickedness, than follow after the love of Christ, and by confession of their sins receiving pardon be restored.

Gregory. (Hom. 39. ut sup.) But our Redeemer does not withdraw His word of preaching even from the unworthy and ungrateful. Accordingly after having by the ejection of the corrupt maintained the strictness of discipline, He now pours forth the gifts of grace. For it follows, *And he was teaching daily in the temple.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Now from what Christ had said and done it was meet that men should worship Him as God, but far from doing this, they sought to slay Him; as it follows, *But the chief priests and scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him.*

Bede. Either because He daily taught in the temple, or because He had cast the thieves therefrom, or that coming thereto as King and Lord, He was greeted with the honour of a heavenly hymn of praise.

Cyril of Alexandria. But the people held Christ in far higher estimation than the Scribes and Pharisees, and chiefs of the Jews, who not receiving the faith of Christ themselves, rebuked others. Hence it follows, *And they could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentire to hear him.*

Bede. This may be taken in two ways; either that fearing a tumult of the people they knew not what they should do with Jesus, whom they had settled to destroy; or they sought to destroy Him because they perceived their own authority set aside, and multitudes flocking to hear Him.

Gregory. (ut sup.) Mystically, such as the temple of God is in a city, such is the life of the religious in a faithful people. And there are frequently some who take upon themselves the religious habit, and while they are receiving the privilege of Holy Orders, are sinking the sacred office of religion into a bargain of worldly traffic. For the sellers in the temple are those who give at a certain price that which is the rightful possession of others. For to sell justice is to observe it on condition of receiving a reward. But the buyers in the temple are those, who whilst unwilling to discharge what is just to their neighbour, and disdaining to do what they are in duty bound to, by paying a price to their patrons, purchase sin.

Origen. If any then sells, let him be cast out, and especially if he sells doves. For of those things which have been revealed and committed to me by the Holy Spirit, I either sell for money to the people, or do not teach without hire, what else do I but sell a dove, that is, the Holy Spirit?

Ambrose. Therefore our Lord teaches generally that all worldly bargains should be far removed from the temple of God; but spiritually He drove away the money-changers, who seek gain from the Lord's money, that is, the divine Scripture, lest they should discern good and evil.

Gregory. (ut sup.) And these make the house of God a den of thieves, because when corrupt men hold religious offices, they slay with the sword of their wickedness their neighbours, whom they ought to raise to life by the intercession of their prayers. The temple also is the soul of the faithful, which if it put forth corrupt thoughts to the injury of a neighbour, then is it become as it were a lurking place of thieves. But when the soul of the faithful is wisely instructed to shun evil, truth teaches daily in the temple.

CHAP. 20

20:1–8

1. And it came to pass, that on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, and preached the Gospel, the Chief Priests and the Scribes came upon him with the elders,

2. And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? or who is he that gave thee this authority?

3. And he answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer me:

4. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?

5. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not?

6. But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

7. And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.

8. And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. l. ii. c. 69.) Having related the casting out of those that bought and sold in the temple, Luke omits Christ's going to Bethany and His return again to the city, and the circumstances of the fig-tree, and the answer which was made to the astonished disciples, concerning the power of faith. And having omitted all these, as he does not, like Mark, pursue the events of each day in order, he commences with these words, *And it came to pass, that on one of those days*; by which we may understand that day on which Matthew and Mark related that event to have taken place.

Eusebius. But the rulers who should have been struck with wonder at one who taught such heavenly doctrines, and have been convinced by His words and deeds that this was the same Christ whom the Prophets had foretold, came to hinder Him, so helping onward the destruction of the people. For it follows, *And spake unto him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest thou these things? &c.* As if he said; By the law of Moses, those only who are sprung from the blood of Levi have authority to teach, and power over the sacred buildings. But Thou who art of the line of Judah usurpest the offices assigned to us. Whereas, O Pharisee, if thou hadst known the Scriptures, thou wouldest have called to mind that this is the Priest after the order of Melchisedec, who offers to God them that believe on Him by that worship which is above the law. Why then art thou troubled. He cast out of the sacred house things which seemed necessary for the sacrifices of the law, because He calls us by faith to the true righteousness.

Bede. Or when they say, *By what authority doest thou these things?* they doubt concerning the power of God, and wish it to be understood that of the devil He doeth this. Adding moreover, *And who is he that gave thee this authority?* Most plainly do they deny the Son of God when they think that not by His own power but another's He doeth miracles. Now our Lord by a simple answer might have refuted such a calumny; but He wisely asks a question, that by their silence or their words they might condemn themselves. *And he answered and said unto them, I also will ask, &c.*

Theophylact. For that He might shew that they had always rebelled against the Holy Spirit, and that besides Isaiah, whom they remembered not, they had refused to believe John whom they had lately seen; He now in his turn puts the question to them, proving that if so great a Prophet as John who was accounted greatest among them had been disbelieved when he testified of Him, they would in no wise believe Him, answering by what authority He did this.

Eusebius. His question concerning John the Baptist is not from whence was he sprung, but whence received he his law of baptism But they feared not to shun the truth. For God sent John as a voice, crying, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord.* But they dreaded to speak the truth, lest it should be said, *Why did ye not believe?* and they scruple to blame the forerunner, not from fear of God, but of the people; as it follows, *And they reasoned within themselves, saying, If we shall say, From, heaven; he will say, Why then believed ye him not.*

Bede. As if He should say, He whom yon confess had his gift of prophecy from heaven, and gave testimony to Me. And ye heard from him by what power I should do these things. It follows, *But if we shall say, Of men; the whole people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.* Therefore perceived they in whatever way they should answer they would fall into a trap, fearing the stoning, but much more the confession of the truth. And then it follows, *And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was.* Because they will not confess that which they knew, they were baffled, and the Lord would not tell them what He knew; as it follows, *And Jesus said unto them, Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.* For there are two reasons especially why we should conceal the truth from those that ask; for example, when the questioner is incapable of understanding what he asks, or when from hatred or contempt he is unworthy to have his questions answered.

20:9–18

9. Then began he to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard, and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time.

10. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty.

11. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.

12. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

13. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

14. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be our's.

15. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16. He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17. And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?

18. Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

Eusebius. The rulers of the Jewish people being now assembled together in the temple, Christ put forth a parable, foretelling by a figure the things they were about to do to Him, and the rejection that was in store for them.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. l. ii. c. 70.) Matthew has omitted for brevity's sake what Luke has not, namely, that the parable was spoken not to the rulers only who asked concerning His authority, but also to the people.

Ambrose. Now many derive different meanings from the name vineyard, but Esaias clearly relates the vineyard of the Lord of Sabaoth to be the house

of Israel. (Isa. 5.) This vineyard who else but God planted?

Bede. The man then who plants the vineyard is the same who, according to another parable, hired labourers into his vineyard.

Eusebius. But the parable which Esaias gives denounces the vineyard, whereas our Saviour's parable is not directed against the vineyard, but the cultivators of it; of whom it is added, *And he let it out to husbandmen*, that is, to the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the doctors, and all the nobles.

Theophylact. Or each one of the people is the vineyard, each likewise is the husbandman, for every one of us takes care of himself. Having committed then the vineyard to the husbandmen, he went away, that is, he left them to the guidance of their own judgment. Hence it follows, *And went into a far country for a long time.*

Ambrose. Not that our Lord journeys from place to place, seeing that He is ever present in every place, but that He is more present to those who love Him, while He removes Himself from those who regard Him not. But He was absent for a long time, lest His coming to require His fruit might seem too early. For the more indulgent it is, it renders obstinacy the less excusable.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or God took Himself away from the vineyard for the course of many years, for since the time that He was seen to descend in the likeness of fire upon Mount Sinai, He no longer vouchsafed to them His visible presence; though no change took place, in which He sent not His prophets and righteous men to give warning thereof; as it follows, *And at the time of the vintage he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard.* (Exod. 19.)

Theophylact. He says of the fruit of the vineyard, because not the whole fruit, but part only, He wished to receive. For what does God gain from us, but His own knowledge, which is also our profit.

Bede. But it is rightly written fruit, not increase. For there was no increase in this vineyard. The first servant sent was Moses, who for forty years sought of the husbandmen the fruit of the law which he had given, but he was wroth against them, for they provoked his spirit. Hence it follows, *But they beat him, and sent him away empty.*

Ambrose. And it came to pass that He ordained many others, whom the Jews sent back to him disgraced and empty, for they could reap nothing from them; as it follows, *And again he sent another servant.*

Bede. By the other servant is meant David, who was sent after the commandment of the law, that he by the music of his psalmody might stir up the husbandmen to the exercise of good works. But they on the contrary declared, *What portion have we in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse.* (1 Sam. 20:1.). Hence it follows, *And they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty.* (1 Kings 12:16.) But He does not stop here, for it follows, *And again he sent a third*: whereby we must understand the company of prophets who constantly visited the people with their testimony. But which of the Prophets did they not persecute; as it follows, *And they wounded him also, and cast him out.* Now these three successions of servants, our Lord elsewhere shews to comprehend under a figure all the teachers under the law, when He says, *For all those things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me.*

Theophylact. After the prophets then had suffered all these things, the Son is delegated; for it follows, *Then said the Lord of the vineyard, What shall I do?* That the Lord of the vineyard speaks doubtingly, arises not from ignorance, for what is there that the Lord knows not? but He is said to hesitate, that the free will of man may be preserved.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Lord of the vineyard also ponders what He should do, not that He is in need of ministers, but that having thoroughly tried every device of human aid, yet His people being in no wise healed, He may add something greater; as He goes on to say, *I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him.*

Theophylact. Now He said this, not as ignorant that they would treat Him worse than they did the prophets, but because the Son ought to be reverenced by them. But if they should still be rebellious and slay Him, this would crown their iniquity. Lest therefore any should say that the Divine Presence has necessarily been the cause of their disobedience, He uses purposely this doubtful mode of speech.

Ambrose. When then the only-begotten Son was sent to them, the unbelieving Jews, wishing to be rid of the Heir, put Him to death by crucifying Him, and rejected Him by denying Him. Christ is the Heir and the Testator likewise. The Heir, because He survives His own death; and of the testament which He Himself bequeathed, He reaps as it were the hereditary profits in our advances.

Bede. But our Lord most clearly proves that the Jewish rulers crucified the Son of God not from ignorance but for envy. For they knew it was He to whom it was said, *I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.* (Ps. 2:8.) *And they cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.* (Heb. 13:12.) Because Jesus, that He might sanctify the people by His blood, suffered without the gate.

Theophylact. Since we have already assumed the people, not Jerusalem, to be the vineyard, it may perhaps be more properly said that the people indeed slew Him without the vineyard; that is, our Lord suffered without the hands of the people, because in truth the people did not with their own hands inflict death upon Him, but delivered Him up to Pilate and the Gentiles. But some by the vineyard have understood the Scripture, which not believing they slew the Lord. And so without the vineyard, that is, without Scripture, our Lord is said to have suffered.

Bede. Or was He cast out of the vineyard and slain, because He was first driven out of the hearts of the unbelievers, and then fastened to the cross?

Chrysostom. Now it was not accidentally but part of the purpose of the divine dispensation that Christ came after the prophets. For God does not pursue all things at once, but accommodates Himself to mankind through His great mercy; for if they despised His Son coming after His servants, much less would they have heard Him before. For they who listened not to the inferior commands, how would they have heard the greater?

Ambrose. He rightly puts a question to them, that they may condemn themselves by their own words, as it follows, *What then will the Lord of the vineyard do to them?*

Basil. And this happens as it were to men who are condemned, having nothing to answer to the plain evidence of justice. But it is the property of Divine mercy not to inflict punishment in secret, but to foretell it with threatenings, that so it might recall men to repentance; and thus it follows here, *He shall come and destroy those husbandmen.*

Ambrose. He says, the Lord of the vineyard will come, because in the Son is present also the Father's majesty; or because in the last times He will be more graciously present by His Spirit in the hearts of men.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Jewish rulers were shut out then, because they resisted their Lord's will, and made the vineyard barren which was entrusted to them. But the cultivation of the vineyard was given to the Priests of the New Testament, upon which the Scribes and Pharisees, as soon as they perceived the force of the parable, refuse to permit it, saying as follows, *God forbid*. They did not however escape any whit the more, because of their obstinacy and disobedience to the faith of Christ.

Theophylact. Now Matthew seems to relate the parable differently; that when our Saviour asked indeed, *What will he do then to the husbandmen?* the Jews answered, *he will miserably destroy them*. But there is no difference between the two circumstances. The Jews at first pronounced that opinion, then perceiving the point of the parable said, *God forbid*, as Luke here relates.

Augustine. (de con. Ev. lib. iv. cap. 70.) Or else, in the multitude of which we are speaking there were those who craftily asked our Lord by what authority He acted; there were those also who not craftily, but faithfully, cried aloud, *Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord*. And so there would be some who would say, *He will miserably destroy those husbandmen, and let out his vineyard to others*. Which are rightly said to have been the words of our Lord Himself, either on account of their truth, or because of the unity of the members with the head; while there would be others also who would say to those who made this answer, God forbid, inasmuch as they understood the parable was spoken against themselves. It follows, *And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?*

Bede. As if He said, How shall the prophecy be fulfilled, except that Christ, being rejected and slain by you, is to be preached to the Gentiles, who will believe on Him, that as the corner stone He may thus from both nations build up one temple to Himself?

Eusebius. Christ is called *a stone* on account of His earthly body, *cut out without hands*, (Dan. 2:34.) as in the vision of Daniel, because of His birth of the Virgin. But the stone is neither of silver nor gold, because He is not any glorious King, but a man lowly and despised, wherefore the builders rejected Him.

Theophylact. For the rulers of the people rejected Him, when they said, *This man is not of God*. (John 9:16.) But He was so useful and so precious, that He was placed as the head stone of the corner.

Cyril of Alexandria. But holy Scripture compares to a corner the meeting together of the two nations, the Jew and the Gentile, into one faith. (1 Pet. 2:7. Eph. 2:20.) For the Saviour has compacted both peoples into one new man, reconciling them in one body to the Father. Of saving help then is that stone to the corner made by it, but to the Jews who resist this spiritual union, it bringeth destruction.

Theophylact. He mentions two condemnations or destructions of them, one indeed of their souls, which they suffered being offended in Christ. And He touches this when He says, *Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be shaken to pieces*. But the other of their captivity and extermination, which the Stone that was despised by them brought upon them. And He points to this when He says, *But upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder*, or winnow him. For so were the Jews winnowed through the whole world, as the straw from the threshing floor. And mark the order of things; for first comes the wickedness committed against Him, then follows the just vengeance of God.

Bede. Or else, He who is a sinner, yet believes on Christ, falls indeed upon the stone and is shaken, for he is preserved by penitence unto salvation. But upon whomsoever it shall fall, that is, upon whom the stone itself has come down because he denied it, it shall grind him to powder, so that not even a broken piece of a vessel shall be left, in which may be drunk a little water. Or, He means by those who fall upon Him, such as only despise Him, and therefore do not yet utterly perish, but are shaken violently so that they cannot walk upright. But upon whom it falls, upon them shall He come in judgment with everlasting punishment, therefore shall it grind them to powder, that they may be as *the dust which the wind scatters from the face of the earth*. (Ps. 1:4.)

Ambrose. The vineyard is also our type. For the husbandman is the Almighty Father, the vine is Christ, but we are the branches. (John 15:5.) Rightly are the people of Christ called a vine, either because it carries on its front the sign of the cross, or because its fruits are gathered in the latter time of the year, or because to all men, as to the equal rows of vines, poor as well as rich, servants as well as masters, there is an equal allotment in the Church without distinction of persons. And as the vine is married to the trees, so is the body to the soul. Loving this vineyard, the husbandman is wont to dig it and prune it, lest it grow too luxuriant in the shade of its foliage, and check by unfruitful boastfulness of words the ripening of its natural character. Here must be the vintage of the whole world, for here is the vineyard of the whole world.

Bede. (in Marc. 12.) Or understanding it morally; to every one of the faithful is let out a vineyard to cultivate, in that the mystery of baptism is entrusted to him to work out. One servant is sent, a second and a third, when the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets are read. But the servant who is sent is said to be treated despitefully or beaten, when the word heard is despised or blasphemed. The heir who is sent that man kills as far as he can, who by sin tramples under foot the Son of God. (Heb. 6:6.) The wicked husbandman being destroyed, the vineyard is given to another, when with the gift of grace, which the proud man spurned, the humble are enriched.

20:19–26

19. And the Chief Priests and the Scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20. And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21. And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly:

22. Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?

23. But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

24. Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, Cæsar's.

25. And he said unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.

26. And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

Cyril of Alexandria. It became indeed the rulers of the Jews, perceiving that the parable was spoken of them, to depart from evil, having been thus as it were warned concerning the future. But little mindful of this, they rather gather a fresh occasion for their crimes. The commandment of the Law restrained them not, which says, *The innocent and righteous men thou shalt not slay*, (Exod. 23:7.) but the fear of the people checked their wicked purpose. For they set the fear of man before the reverence of God. The reason of this purpose is given, *for they perceived that he spoke this parable against them.*

Bede. And so by seeking to slay Him, they proved the truth of what He had said in the parable. For He Himself is the Heir, whose unjust death He said was to be punished. They are the wicked husbandmen who sought to kill the Son of God. This also is daily committed in the Church when any one, only in name a brother, is ashamed or afraid, because of the many good men with whom he lives, to break into that unity of the Church's faith and peace which he abhors. And because the chief priests sought to lay hold of our Lord but could not by themselves, they tried to accomplish it by the hands of the governor; as it follows, *And they watched him, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For they seemed to be trifling, yet were in earnest, forgetful of God, who says, *Who is this that hideth his counsel from me?* (Job 42:3.) For they come to Christ the Saviour of all, as though He were a common man, as it follows, *that they might take him in his speech.*

Theophylact. They laid snares for our Lord, but got their own feet entangled in them. Listen to their cunning, *And they asked Him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly.*

Bede. This smooth and artful question was to entice the answerer to say that he fears God rather than Cæsar, for it follows, *Neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly.* This they say, to entice Him to tell them that they ought not to pay tribute, in order that the servants of the guard, (who according to the other Evangelists are said to have been present,) might immediately upon hearing it seize Him as the leader of a sedition against the Romans. And so they proceed to ask, *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?* For there was a great division among the people, some saying that for the sake of security and quiet, seeing that the Romans fought for all, they ought to pay tribute; while the Pharisees, on the contrary, declared, that the people of God who gave tithes and first fruits, ought not to be subject to the law of man.

Theophylact. Therefore it was intended, in case He said they ought to give tribute to Cæsar, that He should be accused by the people, as placing the nation under the yoke of slavery, but if He forbade them to pay the tax, that they should denounce Him as a stirrer up of divisions to the governor. But He escapes their snares, as it follows, *Perceiving their craftiness, he said unto them, Why tempt ye me? Shew me a penny. Whose image and superscription has it?*

Ambrose. Our Lord here teaches us, how cautious we ought to be in our answers to heretics or Jews; as He has said elsewhere, *Be ye wise as serpents* (Mat. 10:16).

Bede. Let those who impute the question of our Saviour to ignorance, learn from this place that Jesus was well able to know whose image was on the money; but He asks the question, that He might give a fitting answer to their words; for it follows, *They answered and said, Cæsar's.* We must not suppose Augustus is thereby meant, but Tiberius, for all the Roman kings were called Cæsar, from the first Caius Cæsar. But from their answer our Lord easily solves the question, for it follows, *And he said unto them, Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's.*

Titus Bostrensis. As if He said, With your words ye tempt me, obey me in works. Ye have indeed Cæsar's image, ye have undertaken his offices, to him therefore give tribute, to God fear. For God requireth not money, but faith.

Bede. Render also to God the things which be God's, that is to say, tithes, first fruits, offerings, and sacrifices.

Theophylact. And observe that He said not, give, but return. For it is a debt. Thy prince protects thee from enemies, renders thy life tranquil. Surely then thou art bound to pay him tribute. Nay, this very piece of money which thou bringest thou hast from him. Return then to the king the king's money. God also has given thee understanding and reason, make then a return of these to Him, that thou mayest not be compared to the beasts, but in all things mayest walk wisely.

Ambrose. Be unwilling then, if thou wouldest not offend Cæsar, to possess worldly goods. And thou rightly teachest, first to render the things which be Cæsar's. For no one can be the Lord's unless he has first renounced the world. Oh most galling chain! To promise to God, and pay not. Far greater is the contract of faith than that of money.

Origen. Now this place contains a mystery. For there are two images in man, one which he received from God, as it is written, *Let us make man in our own image*: (Gen. 1:26.) another from the enemy, which he has contracted through disobedience and sin, allured and won by the enticing baits of the prince of this world. For as the penny has the image of the emperor of the world, so he who does the works of the power of darkness, bears the image of Him whose works he doth. He says then, *Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's*, that is, cast away the earthly image, that ye may be able, by putting on the heavenly image, to render unto God the things which be God's, namely, to love God. Which things Moses says God requires of us. (Deut. 10:12.) But God makes this demand of us, not because He has need that we should give Him any thing, but that, when we have given, He might grant us this very same gift for our salvation.

Bede. Now they who ought rather to have believed such great wisdom, marvelled that in all their cunning they had found no opportunity of catching Him. As it follows, *And they could not take hold of his words before the people: and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.*

Theophylact. This was their main object, to rebuke Him before the people, which they were unable to do because of the wonderful wisdom of His answer.

27. Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

28. Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

29. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children.

30. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

31. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died.

32. Last of all the woman died also.

33. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

34. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage:

35. But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage:

36. Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

37. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

39. Then certain of the Scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.

40. And after that they durst not ask him any question at all.

Bede. There were two heresies among the Jews, one of the Pharisees, who boasted in the righteousness of their traditions, and hence they were called by the people, "separated;" the other of the Sadducees, whose name signified "righteous," claiming to themselves that which they were not. When the former went away, the latter came to tempt Him.

Origen. The heresy of the Sadducees not only denies the resurrection of the dead, but also believes the soul to die with the body. Watching then to entrap our Saviour in His words, they proposed a question just at the time when they observed Him teaching His disciples concerning the resurrection; as it follows, *And they asked him, saying, Master, Moses wrote to us, If a brother, &c.*

Ambrose. According to the letter of the law, a woman is compelled to marry, however unwilling, in order that a brother may raise up seed to his brother who is dead. The letter therefore killeth, but the Spirit is the master of charity.

Theophylact. Now the Sadducees resting upon a weak foundation, did not believe in the doctrine of the resurrection. For imagining the future life in the resurrection to be carnal, they were justly misled, and hence reviling the doctrine of the resurrection as a thing impossible they invent the story, *There were seven brothers, &c.*

Bede. (ut sup.) They devise this story in order to convict those of folly, who assert the resurrection of the dead. Hence they object a base fable, that they may deny the truth of the resurrection.

Ambrose. Mystically, this woman is the synagogue, which had seven husbands, as it is said to the Samaritan, *Thou hadst five husbands*, (John 4:18.) because the Samaritan follows only the five books of Moses, the synagogue for the most part seven. And from none of them has she received the seed of an hereditary offspring, and so can have no part with her husbands in the resurrection, because she perverts the spiritual meaning of the precept into a carnal. For not any carnal brother is pointed at, who should raise seed to his deceased brother, but that brother who from the dead people of the Jews should claim unto himself for wife the wisdom of the divine worship, and from it should raise up seed in the Apostles, who being left as it were unformed in the womb of the synagogue, have according to the election of grace been thought worthy to be preserved by the admixture of a new seed.

Bede. Or these seven brothers answer to the reprobate, who throughout the whole life of the world, which revolves in seven days, are fruitless in good works, and these being carried away by death one after another, at length the course of the evil world, as the barren woman, itself also passes away.

Theophylact. But our Lord shews that in the resurrection there will be no fleshly conversation, thereby overthrowing their doctrine together with its slender foundation; as it follows, *And Jesus said unto them, The children of this world marry, &c.*

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. l. ii. cap. 49.) For marriages are for the sake of children, children for succession, succession because of death. Where then there is no death, there are no marriages; and hence it follows, *But they which shall be accounted worthy, &c.*

Bede. Which must not be taken as if only they who are worthy were either to rise again or be without marriage, but all sinners also shall rise again, and abide without marriage in that new world. But our Lord wished to mention only the elect, that He might incite the minds of His hearers to search into the glory of the resurrection.

Augustine. (de Quæst. Ev. ubi sup.) As our discourse is made up and completed by departing and succeeding syllables, so also men themselves whose faculty discourse is, by departure and succession make up and complete the order of this world, which is built up with the mere temporal beauty of things. But in the future life, seeing that the Word which we shall enjoy is formed by no departure and succession of syllables, but all things which it has it has everlastingly and at once, so those who partake of it, to whom it alone will be life, shall neither depart by death, nor succeed by birth, even as it now is with the angels; as it follows, *For they are equal to the angels.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For as the multitude of the angels is indeed very great, yet they are not propagated by generation, but have their being from creation,

so also to those who rise again, there is no more necessity for marriage; as it follows, *And are the children of God.*

Theophylact. As if He said, Because it is God who worketh in the resurrection, rightly are they called the sons of God, who are regenerated by the resurrection. For there is nothing carnal seen in the regeneration of them that rise again, there is neither coming together, nor the womb, nor birth.

Bede. Or they are equal to the angels, and the children of God, because made new by the glory of the resurrection, with no fear of death, with no spot of corruption, with no quality of an earthly condition, they rejoice in the perpetual beholding of God's presence.

Origen. But because the Lord says in Matthew, which is here omitted, *Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures*, (Mat. 22:29.) I ask the question, where is it so written, *They shall neither marry, nor be given in marriage?* for as I conceive there is no such thing to be found either in the Old or New Testament, but the whole of their error had crept in from the reading of the Scriptures without understanding; for it is said in Esaias, *My elect shall not have children for a curse.* (Isai. 65:23.) Whence they suppose that the like will happen in the resurrection. But Paul interpreting all these blessings as spiritual, knowing them not to be carnal, says to the Ephesians, *Ye have blessed us in all spiritual blessings.* (Eph. 1:3.)

Theophylact. Or to the reason above given the Lord added the testimony of Scripture, *Now that the dead are raised, Moses also shewed at the bush*, (Exod. 3:6.) as the Lord saith, *I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* As if he said, If the patriarchs have once returned to nothing so as not to live with God in the hope of a resurrection, He would not have said, *I am*, but, I was, for we are accustomed to speak of things dead and gone thus, I was the Lord or Master of such a thing; but now that He said, *I am*, He shews that He is the God and Lord of the living. This is what follows, *But he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.* For though they have departed from life, yet live they with Him in the hope of a resurrection.

Bede. Or He says this, that after having proved that the souls abide alter death, (which the Sadducees denied,) He might next introduce the resurrection also of the bodies, which together with the souls have done good or evil. But that is a true life which the just live unto God, even though they are dead in the body. Now to prove the truth of the resurrection, He might have brought much more obvious examples from the Prophets, but the Sadducees received only the five books of Moses, rejecting the oracles of the Prophets.

Chrysostom. (de Anna, Serm. 4.) As the saints claim as their own the common Lord of the world, not as derogating from His dominion, but testifying their affection after the manner of lovers, who do not brook to love with many, but desire to express a certain peculiar and especial attachment; so likewise does God call Himself especially the God of these, not thereby narrowing but enlarging His dominion; for it is not so much the multitude of His subjects that manifests His power, as the virtue of His servants. Therefore He does not so delight in the name of the God of heaven and earth, as in that of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now among men servants are thus denominated by their masters; for we say, 'The steward *of* such a man,' but on the contrary God is called the God *of* Abraham.

Theophylact. But when the Sadducees were silenced, the Scribes commend Jesus, for they were opposed to them, saying to Him, *Master, thou hast well said.*

Bede. And since they had been defeated in argument, they ask Him no further questions, but seize Him, and deliver Him up to the Roman power. From which we may learn, that the poison of envy may indeed be subdued, but it is a hard thing to keep it at rest.

20:41–44

41. And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?

42. And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord. said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

43. Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

44. David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?

Theophylact. Although our Lord was shortly about to enter on His Passion, He proclaims His own Godhead, and that too neither incautiously nor boastfully, but with modesty. For He puts a question to them, and having thrown them into perplexity, leaves them to reason out the conclusion; as it follows, *And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's son?*

Ambrose. They are not blamed here because they acknowledge Him to be David's Son, for the blind man for so doing was thought worthy to be healed. (Luke 18:42.) And the children saying, *Hosanna to the Son of David*, (Matt. 21:9.) rendered to God the glory of the highest praise; but they are blamed because they believe Him not to be the Son of God. Hence it is added, *And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord.* (Ps. 110:1.) Both the Father is Lord and the Son is Lord, but there are not two Lords, but one Lord, for the Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. He Himself sits at the right hand of the Father, for He is coequal with the Father, inferior to none; for it follows, *Sit thou at my right hand.* He is not honoured by sitting at the right hand, nor is He degraded by being sent. Degrees of dignity are not sought for, where is the fulness of divinity.

Augustine. (de Symbolo. ad Catech. l. ii. c. 7.) By the sitting we must not conceive a posture of the human limbs, as if the Father sat on the left and the Son on: the right, but the right hand itself we must interpret to be the power which that Man received who was taken up into Himself by God, that He should come to judge, who at first came to be judged.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or, that He sits on the Father's right hand proves His heavenly glory. For whose throne is equal, their Majesty is equal. But sitting when it is said of God signifies a universal kingdom and power. Therefore He sitteth at the right hand of the Father, because the Word proceeding from the substance of the Father, being made flesh, putteth not off His divine glory.

Theophylact. He manifests then that He is not opposed to the Father, but agrees with Him, since the Father resists the Son's enemies, *Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.*

Ambrose. We must believe then that Christ is both God and man, and that His enemies are made subject to Him by the Father, not through the weakness of His power, but through the unity of their nature, since in the one the other works. For the Son also subjects enemies to the Father, in that He glorifies the Father upon earth. (John 17:6.)

Theophylact. Therefore He asks the question, and having excited their doubts, leaves them to deduce the consequence; as it follows, *David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his son?*

Chrysostom. David in truth was both the Father and the servant of Christ, the former indeed according to the flesh, the latter in the Spirit.

Cyril of Alexandria. We then likewise in answer to the new Pharisees, who neither confess the Son of the holy Virgin to be the true Son of God, nor to be God, but divide one son into two, put the like objections: How then is the Son of David David's Lord, and that not by human lordship, but divine?

20:45–47

45. Then in the audience of all the people he said unto his disciples,

46. Beware of the Scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

47. Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 19. in Joann.) Now nothing is more powerful than to argue from the Prophets. For this is even of more weight than miracles themselves. For when Christ worked miracles, He was often gainsayed. But when He cited the Prophets, men were at once silent, because they had nothing to say. But when they were silent, He warns against them; as it is said, *Then in the audience of all the people he said to his disciples.*

Theophylact. For as He was sending them to teach the world, He rightly warns them not to imitate the pride of the Pharisees. *Beware of the Scribes, who desire to walk in long robes*, that is, to go forth into public, dressed in fine clothes, which was one of the sins remarked in the rich man. (Luke 16:19.)

Cyril of Alexandria. The passions of the Scribes were the love of vainglory and the love of gain. That the disciples should avoid these hateful crimes, He gives them this warning, and adds, *And love greetings in the markets.*

Theophylact. Which is the way of those who court and hunt after a good reputation, or they do it for the sake of collecting money.

It follows, *And the chief seats in synagogues.*

Bede. He does not forbid those to sit first in the synagogue, or at the feast, to whom this dignity belongs by right, but He tells them to beware of those who love this unduly; denouncing not the distinction, but the love of it. Though the other also would not be free from blame, when the same men who wish to take part in the disputes in the market, desire also to be called masters in the synagogue. For two reasons we are bid to beware of those who seek after vain-glory, either lest we be led away by their pretences, supposing those things to be good which they do, or be inflamed with jealousy, desiring in vain to be praised for the good deeds which they pretend to. But they seek not only for praise from men, but money; for it follows, *Who devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers.* For pretending to be righteous and of great merit before God, they do not fail to receive large sums of money from the sick and those whose consciences are disturbed with their sins, as though they would be their protectors in the judgment.

Chrysostom. Thrusting themselves also into the possessions of widows, they grind down their poverty, not content to eat as it may be afforded them, but greedily devouring; using prayer also to an evil end, they thus expose themselves to a heavier condemnation; as it follows, *These shall receive the greater damnation.*

Theophylact. Because they not only do what is evil, but make a pretence of prayer, so making virtue an excuse for their sin. They also impoverish widows whom they were bound to pity, by their presence driving them to great expenses.

Bede. Or because they seek from men praise and money, they are punished with the greater damnation.

CHAP. 21

21:1–4

1. And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury.

2. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

3. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

4. For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

Gloss. (non occ.) Our Lord having rebuked the covetousness of the Scribes who devoured widows' houses, commends the almsgiving of a widow; as it is said, *And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting into the treasury, & c.*

Bede. In the Greek language, φυλάξαι signifies to keep, and gaza in Persian means riches, hence gazophylacium is used for the name of the place in which money is kept. Now there was a chest with an opening at the top placed near the altar, on the right hand of those entering the house of God, into which the Priests cast all the money, which was given for the Lord's temple. But our Lord as He overthrows those who trade in His house, so also He remarks those who bring gifts, giving praise to the deserving, but condemning the bad. Hence it follows, *And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.*

Cyril of Alexandria. She offered two *oboli*, which with the sweat of her brow she had earned for her daily living, or what she daily begs for at the hands

of others she gives to God, shewing that her poverty is fruitful to her. Therefore does she surpass the others, and by a just award receives a crown from God; as it follows, *Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more, &c.*

Bede. For whatever we offer with an honest heart is well pleasing to God, who hath respect unto the heart, not the substance, nor does He weigh the amount of that which is given in sacrifice, but of that from which it is taken; as it follows, *For all these have cast in of their abundance, but she all that she had.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 1. in Ep. ad Heb., Hom. 28.) For God regarded not the scantiness of the offering, but the overflowing of the affection. Almsgiving is not the bestowing a few things out of many, but it is that of the widow emptying, herself of her whole substance. But if you cannot offer as much as the widow, at least give all that remains over.

Bede. Now mystically, the rich men who cast their gifts into the treasury signify the Jews puffed up with the righteousness of the law; the poor widow, the simplicity of the Church which is called poor, because it has either cast away the spirit of pride, or its sins, as if they were worldly riches. But the Church is a widow, because her Husband endured death for her. She cast two mites into the treasury, because in God's sight, in whose keeping are all the offerings of our works, she presents her gifts, whether of love to God and her neighbour, or of faith and prayer. And these excel all the works of the proud Jews, for they of their abundance cast into the offerings of God, in that they presume on their righteousness, but the Church casts in all her living, for every thing that hath life she believes to be the gift of God.

Theophylact. Or the widow may be taken to mean any soul bereft as it were of her first husband, the ancient law, and not worthy to be united to the Word of God. Who brings to God instead of a dowry faith and a good conscience, and so seems to offer more than those who are rich in words, and abound in the moral virtues of the Gentiles.

21:5–8

5. And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

6. As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

7. And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

8. And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

Eusebius. How beautiful was every thing relating to the structure of the temple, history informs us, and there are yet preserved remains of it, enough to instruct us in what was once the character of the buildings. But our Lord proclaimed to those that were wondering at the building of the temple, that there should not be left in it one stone upon another. For it was meet that that place, because of the presumption of its worshippers, should suffer every kind of desolation.

Bede. For it was ordained by the dispensation of God that the city itself and the temple should be overthrown, lest perhaps some one yet a child in the faith, while wrapt in astonishment at the rites of the sacrifices, should be carried away by the mere sight of the various beauties.

Ambrose. It was spoken then of the temple made with hands, that it should be overthrown. For there is nothing made with hands which age does not impair, or violence throw down, or fire burn. Yet there is also another temple, that is, the synagogue, whose ancient building falls to pieces as the Church rises. There is also a temple in every one, which falls when faith is lacking, and above all when any one falsely shields himself under the name of Christ, that so he may rebel against his inward inclinations.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now His disciples did not at all perceive the force of His words, but supposed they were spoken of the end of the world. Therefore asked they Him, saying, *Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign, &c.*

Ambrose. Matthew adds a third question, that both the time of the destruction of the temple, and the sign of His coming, and the end of the world, might be inquired into by the disciples. But our Lord being asked when the destruction of the temple should be, and what the sign of His coming, instructs them as to the signs, but does not mind to inform them as to the time. It follows, *Take heed that ye be not deceived.*

Athanasius. (Orat. 1. cont. Arian.) For since we have received, delivered unto us by God, graces and doctrines which are above man, (as, for example, the rule of a heavenly life, power against evil spirits, the adoption and the knowledge of the Father and the Word, the gift of the Holy Spirit,) our adversary the devil goeth about seeking to steal from us the seed of the word which has been sown. But the Lord, shutting up in us His teaching as His own precious gift, warns us, lest we be deceived. And one very great gift He gives us, the word of God, that not only we be not led away by what appears, but even if there is ought lying concealed, by the grace of God we may discern it. For seeing that the devil is the hateful inventor of evil, what he himself is he conceals, but craftily assumes a name desirable to all; just as if a man wishing to get into his power some children not His own, should in the absence of the parents counterfeit their looks, and lead away the children who were longing for them. In every heresy then the devil says in disguise, "I am Christ, and with me there is truth." And so it follows, *For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near.*

Cyril of Alexandria. For before His descent from heaven, there shall come some to whom we must not give place. For the Only-begotten Son of God, when He came to save the world, wished to be in secret, that He might bear the cross for us. But His second coming shall not be in secret, but terrible and open. For He shall descend in the glory of God the Father, with the Angels attending Him, to judge the world in righteousness. Therefore He concludes, *Go ye not therefore after them.*

Titus Bostrensis. Or perhaps He does not speak of false Christs coming before the end of the world, but of those who existed in the Apostles' time.

Bede. For there were many leaders when the destruction of Jerusalem was at hand, who declared themselves to be Christ, and that the time of deliverance was drawing nigh. Many heresiarchs also in the Church have preached that the day of the Lord is at hand, whom the Apostles condemn. (2 Thess. 2:2.) Many Antichrists also came in Christ's name, of whom the first was Simon Magus, who said, *This man is the great power of God.* (Acts 8:10.)

21:9–11

9. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

10. Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

11. And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.

Gregory. (in Hom. 35. in Evang.) God denounces the woes that shall forerun the destruction of the world, that so they may the less disturb when they come, as having been foreknown. For darts strike the less which are foreseen. And so He says, *But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, &c.* Wars refer to the enemy, commotions to citizens. To shew us then that we shall be troubled from within and without, He asserts that the one we suffer from the enemy, the other from our own brethren.

Ambrose. But of the heavenly words none are greater witnesses than we, upon whom the ends of the world have come. What wars and what rumours of wars have we received!

Gregory. But that the end will not immediately follow these evils which come first, it is added, *These things must first come to pass; but the end is not yet, &c.* For the last tribulation is preceded by many tribulations, because many evils must come first, that they may await that evil which has no end. It follows, *Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, &c.* For it must needs be that we should suffer some things from heaven, some from earth, some from the elements, and some from men. Here then are signified the confusions of men. It follows, *And great earthquakes shall be in divers places*. This relates to the wrath from above.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 11. in Acta.) For an earthquake is at one time a sign of wrath, as when our Lord was crucified the earth shook; but at another time it is a token of God's providence, as when the Apostles were praying, the place was moved where they were assembled. It follows, *and pestilence.*

Gregory. (in Hom. 35.) Look at the vicissitudes of bodies. *And famine.* Observe the barrenness of the ground. *And fearful sights and great signs there shall be from heaven.* Behold the variableness of the climate, which must be ascribed to those storms which by no means regard the order of the seasons. For the things which come in fixed order are not signs. For every thing that we receive for the use of life we pervert to the service of sin, but all those things which we have bent to a wicked use, are turned to the instruments of our punishment.

Ambrose. The ruin of the world then is preceded by certain of the world's calamities, such as famine, pestilence, and persecution.

Theophylact. Now some have wished to place the fulfilment of these things not only at the future consummation of all things, but at the time also of the taking of Jerusalem. For when the Author of peace was killed, then justly arose among the Jews wars and sedition, But from wars proceed pestilence and famine, the former indeed produced by the air infected with dead bodies, the latter through the lands remaining uncultivated. Josephus also relates the most intolerable distresses to have occurred from famine; and at the time of Claudius Cæsar there was a severe famine, as we read in the Acts, (Acts 11:28.) and many terrible events happened, forboding, as Josephus says, the destruction of Jerusalem.

Chrysostom. But He says, that the end of the city shall not come immediately, that is, the taking of Jerusalem, but there shall be many battles first.

Bede. The Apostles are also exhorted not to be alarmed by these forerunners, nor to desert Jerusalem and Judæa. But the kingdom against kingdom, and the pestilence of those whose word creepeth as a cancer, and the famine of hearing the word of God, and the shaking of the whole earth, and the separation from the true faith, may be explained also in the heretics, who contending one with another bring victory to the Church.

Ambrose. There are also other wars which the Christian wages, the struggles of different lusts, and the conflicts of the will; and domestic foes are far more dangerous than foreign.

21:12–19

12. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake.

13. And it shall turn to you for a testimony.

14. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer:

15. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist.

16. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.

17. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

18. But there shall not an hair of your head perish.

19. In your patience possess ye your souls.

Gregory. (Hom. 35. in Evang.) Because the things which have been prophesied of arise not from the injustice of the inflictor of them, but from the deserts of the world which suffers them, the deeds or wicked men are foretold; as it is said, *But before all these things, they shall lay their hands upon you*: as if He says, First the hearts of men, afterwards the elements, shall be disturbed, that when the order of things is thrown into confusion, it may be plain from what retribution it arises. For although the end of the world depends upon its own appointed course, yet finding some more corrupt than others who shall rightly be overwhelmed in its fall, our Lord makes them known.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or He says this, because before that Jerusalem should be taken by the Romans, the disciples, having suffered persecution from the Jews, were imprisoned and brought before rulers; Paul was sent to Rome to Cæsar, and stood before Festus and Agrippa.

It follows, *And it shall turn to you for a testimony*. In the Greek it is εἰς μαρτύριον, that is, for the glory of martyrdom.

Gregory. (ut sup.) Or, for a testimony, that is, against those who by persecuting you bring death upon themselves, or living do not imitate you, or themselves becoming hardened perish without excuse, from whom the elect take example that they may live. But as hearing so many terrible things the hearts of men may be troubled, He therefore adds for their consolation, *Settle it therefore in your hearts, &c.*

Theophylact. For because they were foolish and inexperienced, the Lord tells them this, that they might not be confounded when about to give account to the wise. And He adds the cause, *For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist*. As if He said, Ye shall forthwith receive of me eloquence and wisdom, so that all your adversaries, were they gathered together in one, shall not be able to resist you, neither in wisdom, that is, the power of the understanding, nor in eloquence, that is, excellence of speech, for many men have often wisdom in their mind, but being easily provoked to their great disturbance, mar the whole when their time of speaking comes, But not such were the Apostles, for in both these gifts they were highly favoured.

Gregory. (ut sup.) As if the Lord said to His disciples, "Be not afraid, go forward to the battle, it is I that fight; you utter the words, I am He that speaketh."

Ambrose. Now in one place Christ speaks in His disciples, as here; in another, the Father; (Mat. 16:17) in another the Spirit of the Father speaketh. (Mat. 10:20.) These do not differ but agree together, In that one speaketh, three speak, for the voice of the Trinity is one.

Theophylact. Having in what has gone before dispelled the fear of inexperience, He goes on to warn them of another very certain event, which might agitate their minds, lest falling suddenly upon them, it should dismay them; for it follows, *And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and some of you shall they cause to be put to death.*

Gregory. (ut sup.) We are the more galled by the persecutions we suffer from those of whose dispositions we made sure, because together with the bodily pain, we are tormented by the bitter pangs of lost affection.

Gregory of Nyssa. But let us consider the state of things at that time. While all men were suspected, kinsfolk were divided against one another, each differing from the other in religion; the gentile son stood up the betrayer of his believing parents, and of his believing son the unbelieving father became the determined accuser; no age was spared in the persecution of the faith; women were unprotected even by the natural weakness of their sex.

Theophylact. To all this He adds the hatred which they shall meet with from all men.

Gregory. (ut sup.) But because of the hard things foretold concerning the affliction of death, there immediately follows a consolation, concerning the joy of the resurrection, when it is said, *But there shall not an hair of your head perish*. As though He said to the martyrs, Why fear ye for the perishing of that which when cut, pains, when that can not perish in you, which when cut gives no pain?

Bede. Or else, There shall not perish a hair of the head of our Lord's Apostles, because not only the noble deeds and words of the Saints, but even the slightest thought shall meet with its deserving reward.

Gregory. (Mor. 5. c. 16.) He who preserves patience in adversity, is thereby rendered proof against all affliction, and so by conquering himself, he gains the government of himself; as it follows, *In your patience shall ye possess your souls*. For what is it to possess your souls, but to live perfectly in all things, and sitting as it were upon the citadel of virtue to hold in subjection every motion of the mind?

Gregory. (Hom. 35. in Ev.) By patience then we possess our souls, because when we are said to govern ourselves, we begin to possess that very thing which we are. But for this reason, the possession of the soul is laid in the virtue of patience, because patience is the root and guardian of all virtues. Now patience is to endure calmly the evils which are inflicted by others, and also to have no feeling of indignation against him who inflicts them.

21:20–24

20. And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21. Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

Bede. Hitherto our Lord had been speaking of those things which were to come to pass for forty years, the end not yet coming. He now describes the very end itself of the desolation, which was accomplished by the Roman army; as it is said, *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed, &c.*

Eusebius. By the desolation of Jerusalem, He means that it was never again to be set up, or its legal rites to be reestablished, so that no one should expect, after the coming siege and desolation, any restoration to take place, as there was in the time of the Persian king, Antiochus the Great, and Pompey.

Augustine. (ad Hesych. Ep. 199.) These words of our Lord, Luke has here related to shew, that the abomination of desolation which was prophesied by Daniel, and of which Matthew and Mark had spoken, (Mat. 24, Mark 13.) was fulfilled at the siege of Jerusalem.

Ambrose. For the Jews thought that the abomination of desolation took place when the Romans, in mockery of a Jewish observance, cast a pig's head into the temple.

Eusebius. Now our Lord, foreseeing that there would be a famine in the city, warned His disciples in the siege that was coming, not to betake themselves to the city as a place of refuge, and under God's protection, but rather to depart from thence, and flee to the mountains.

Bede. (Ecc. Hist. lib. iii. c. 5.) The ecclesiastical history relates, that all the Christians who were in Judæa, when the destruction of Jerusalem was approaching, being warned of the Lord, departed from that place, and dwelt beyond the Jordan in a city called Pella, until the desolation of Judæa was ended.

Augustine. (ut sup.) And before this, Matthew and Mark said, *And let him that is on the housetop not come down into his house*; and Mark added, *neither enter therein to take any thing out of his house*; in place of which Luke subjoins, *And let them which are in the midst of it depart out.*

Bede. But how, while the city was already compassed with an army, were they to depart out? except that the preceding word "then" is to be referred, not to the actual time of the siege, but the period just before, when first the armed soldiers began to disperse themselves through the parts of Galilee and Samaria.

Augustine. (uti sup.) But where Matthew and Mark have written, *Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes*, Luke adds more clearly, *And let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto, for these be the days of vengeance, that all the things which are written may be fulfilled.*

Bede. And these are the days of vengeance, that is, the days exacting vengeance for our Lord's blood.

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Then Luke follows in words similar to those of the other two; *But woe to them that are with child, and them that give suck in those days*; and thus has made plain what might otherwise have been doubtful, namely, that what was said of the abomination of desolation belonged not to the end of the world, but the taking of Jerusalem.

Bede. He says then, *Woe to them that nurse*, or *give suck*, as some interpret it, whose womb or arms now heavy with the burden of children, cause no slight obstacle to the speed of flight.

Theophylact. But some say that the Lord hereby signified the devouring of children, which Josephus also relates.

Chrysostom. (adv. oppug. mon. vit.) He next assigns the cause of what he had just now said, *For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.* For the miseries that took hold of them were such as, in the words of Josephus, no calamity can henceforth compare to them.

Eusebius. For so in truth it was, that when the Romans came and were taking the city, many multitudes of the Jewish people perished in the mouth of the sword; as it follows, *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword.* But still more were cut off by famine. And these things happened at first indeed under Titus and Vespasian, but after them in the time of Hadrian the Roman general, when the land of their birth was forbidden to the Jews. Hence it follows, *And they shall be led away captive into all nations.* For the Jews filled the whole land, reaching even to the ends of the earth, and when their land was inhabited by strangers, they alone could not enter it; as it follows, *And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.*

Bede. Which indeed the Apostle makes mention of when he says, *Blindness in part is happened to Israel, and so all Israel shall be saved.* (Rom. 11:25.) Which when it shall have gained the promised salvation, hopes not rashly to return to the land of its fathers.

Ambrose. Now mystically, the abomination of desolation is the coming of Antichrist, for with ill-omened sacrilege he pollutes the innermost recesses of the heart, sitting as it is literally in the temple, that he may claim to himself the throne of divine power. But according to the spiritual meaning, he is well brought in, because he desires to impress firmly on the affections the footstep of his unbelief, disputing from the Scriptures that he is Christ. Then shall come desolation, for very many falling away shall depart from the true religion. Then shall be the day of the Lord, since as His first coming was to redeem sin, so also His second shall be to subdue iniquity, lest more should be carried away by the error of unbelief. There is also another Antichrist, that is, the Devil, who is trying to besiege Jerusalem, i. e. the peaceful soul, with the hosts of his law. When then the Devil is in the midst of the temple, there is the desolation of abomination. But when upon any one in trouble the spiritual presence of Christ has shone, the unjust one is cast out, and righteousness begins her reign. There is also a third Antichrist, as Arius and Sabellius and all who with evil purpose lead us astray. But these are they who are with child, to whom woe is denounced, who enlarge the size of their flesh, and the step of whose inmost soul waxes slow, as those who are worn out in virtue, pregnant with vice. But neither do those with child escape condemnation, who though firm in the resolution of good acts, have not yet yielded any fruits of the work undertaken. These are those which conceive from fear of God, but do not all bring forth. For there are some which thrust forth the word abortive before their delivery. There are others too which have Christ in the womb, but have not yet formed Him. Therefore she who brings forth righteousness, brings forth Christ. Let us also hasten to nourish our children, lest the day of judgment or death find us as it were the parents of an imperfect offspring. And this you will do if you keep all the words of righteousness in your heart, and wait not the time of old age, but in your earliest years, without corruption of your body, quickly conceive wisdom, quickly nourish it. But at the end shall all Judæa be made subject to the nations which shall believe, by the mouth of the spiritual sword, which is the two-edged word. (Rev. 1:16; 19:15.)

21:25–27

25. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

26. Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.

Bede. The events which were to follow the fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles He explains in regular order, saying, *There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars*

Ambrose. All which signs are more clearly described in Matthew, *Then shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven.*

Eusebius. For at that time when the end of this perishing life shall be accomplished, and, as the Apostle says, *The fashion of this world passeth away*, (1 Cor. 7:13.) then shall succeed a new world, in which instead of sensible light, Christ Himself shall shine as a sunbeam, and as the King of the new world, and so mighty and glorious will be His light, that the sun which now dazzles so brightly, and the moon and all the stars, shall be hidden by the

coming of a far greater light.

Chrysostom. For as in this world the moon and the stars are soon dimmed by the rising of the sun, so at the glorious appearance of Christ shall the sun become dark, and the moon not shed her ray, and the stars shall fall from heaven, stripped of their former attire, that they may put on the robe of a better light.

Eusebius. What things shall befall the world after the darkening of the orbs of light, and whence shall arise the straitening of nations, He next explains as follows, *And on the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea.* Wherein He seems to teach, that the beginning of the universal change will be owing to the failing of the watery substance. For this being first absorbed or congealed, so that no longer is heard the roaring of the sea, nor do the waves reach the shore because of the exceeding drought, the other parts of the world, ceasing to obtain the usual vapour which came forth from the watery matter, shall undergo a revolution. Accordingly since the appearance of Christ must put down the prodigies which resist God, namely, those of Antichrist, the beginnings of wrath shall take their rise from droughts, such as that neither storm nor roaring of the sea be any more heard. And this event shall be succeeded by the distress of the men who survive; as it follows, *Men's hearts being dried up for fear, and looking after those things which shall come upon the whole world.* But the things that shall then come upon the world He proceeds to declare, adding, *For the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

Theophylact. Or else, When the higher world shall be changed, then also the lower elements shall suffer loss; whence it follows, *And on the earth distress of nations, &c.* As if He said, the sea shall roar terribly, and its shores shall be shaken with the tempest, so that of the people and nations of the earth there shall be distress, that is, a universal misery, so that they shall pine away from fear and expectation of the evils which are coming upon the world.

Augustine. (ad Hes. Ep. 199.) But you will say, your punishment compels you to confess that the end is now approaching, seeing the fulfilment of that which was foretold. For it is certain there is no country, no place in our time, which is not affected or troubled. But if those evils which mankind now suffer are sure signs that our Lord is now about to come, what meaneth that which the Apostle says, *For when they shall say peace and safety.* (1 Thess. 5:3.) Let us see then if it be not perhaps better to understand the words of prophecy to be not so fulfilled, but rather that they will come to pass when the tribulation of the whole world shall be such that it shall belong to the Church, which shall be troubled by the whole world, not to those who shall trouble it. For they are those who shall say, *Peace and safety.* But now these evils which are counted the greatest and most immoderate, we see to be common to both the kingdoms of Christ and the Devil. For the good and the evil are alike afflicted with them, and among these great evils is the yet universal resort to licentious feasts. Is not this the being dried up from fear, or rather the being burnt up from lust?

Theophylact. But not only shall men be tossed about when the world shall be changed, but angels even shall stand amazed at the terrible revolutions of the universe. Hence it follows, *And the powers of heaven shall be shaken.*

Gregory. (Hom. 1. in Ev.) For whom does He call the powers of heaven, but the angels, dominions, principalities, and powers? which at the coming of the strict Judge shall then appear visibly to our eyes, that they may strictly exact judgment of us, seeing that now our invisible Creator patiently bears with us.

Eusebius. When also the Son of God shall come in glory, and shall crush the proud empire of the son of sin, the angels of heaven attending Him, the doors of heaven which have been shut from the foundation of the world shall be opened, that the things that are on high may be witnessed.

Chrysostom. (ad Olymp. Ep. 2.) Or the heavenly powers shall be shaken, although themselves know it not. For when they see the innumerable multitudes condemned, they shall not stand there without trembling.

Bede. Thus it is said in Job, *the pillars of heaven tremble and are afraid at his reproof.* (Job 26:11.) What then do the boards do, when the pillars tremble? what does the shrub of the desert suffer, when the cedar of Paradise is shaken?

Eusebius. Or the powers of heaven are those which preside over the sensible parts of the universe, which indeed shall then be shaken that they may attain to a better state. For they shall be discharged from the ministry with which they serve God toward the sensible bodies in their perishing condition.

Augustine. (ad Hes. ut sup.) But that the Lord may not seem to have foretold as extraordinary those things concerning His second coming, which were wont to happen to this world even before His first coming, and that we may not be laughed at by those who have read more and greater events than these in the history of nations, I think what has been said may be better understood to apply to the Church. For the Church is the sun, the moon, and the stars, to whom it was said, *Fair as the moon, elect as the sun.* (Cant. 6:10.) And she will then not be seen for the unbounded rage of the persecutors.

Ambrose. While many also fall away from religion, clear faith will be obscured by the cloud of unbelief, for to me that Sun of righteousness is either diminished or increased according to my faith; and as the moon in its monthly wanings, or when it is opposite the sun by the interposition of the earth, suffers eclipse, so also the holy Church when the sins of the flesh oppose the heavenly light, cannot borrow the brightness of divine light from Christ's rays. For in persecutions, the love of this world generally shuts out the light of the divine Sun; the stars also fall, that is, men who shine in glory fall when the bitterness of persecution waxes sharp and prevails. And this must be until the multitude of the Church be gathered in, for thus are the good tried and the weak made manifest.

Augustine. (ut sup.) But in the words, *And upon the earth distress of nations*, He would understand by *nations*, not those which shall be blessed in the seed of Abraham, but those which shall stand on the left hand.

Ambrose. So severe then will be the manifold fires of our souls, that with consciences depraved through the multitude of crimes, by reason of our fear of the coming judgment, the dew of the sacred fountain will be dried upon us. But as the Lord's coming is looked for, in order that His presence may dwell in the whole circle of mankind or the world, which now dwells in each individual who has embraced Christ with his whole heart, so the powers of heaven shall at our Lord's coming obtain an increase of grace, and shall be moved by the fulness of the Divine nature more closely infusing itself. There are also heavenly powers which proclaim the glory of God, which shall be stirred by a fuller infusion of Christ, that they may see Christ.

Augustine. (ut sup.) Or the powers of heaven shall be stirred, because when the ungodly persecute, some of the most stout-hearted believers shall be troubled.

Theophylact. (ut sup.) It follows, *And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds.* Both the believers and unbelievers shall see Him, for He Himself as well as His cross shall glisten brighter than the sun, and so shall be observed of all.

Augustine. (ut sup.) But the words, *coming in the clouds*, may be taken in two ways. Either coming in His Church as it were in a cloud, as He now ceases not to come. But then it shall be with great power and majesty, for far greater will His power and might appear to His saints, to whom He will give great virtue, that they may not be overcome in such a fearful persecution. Or in His body in which He sits at His Father's right hand He must rightly be supposed to come, and not only in His body, but also in a cloud, for He will come even as He went away, *And a cloud received him out of their sight*.

Chrysostom. For God ever appears in a cloud, according to the Psalms, *clouds and darkness are round about him.* (Ps. 17:11.) Therefore shall the Son of man come in the clouds as God, and the Lord, not secretly, but in glory worthy of God. Therefore He adds, *with great power and majesty*.

Cyril of Alexandria. *Great* must be understood in like manner. For His first appearance He made in our weakness and lowliness, the second He shall celebrate in all His own power.

Gregory. (ut sup.) For in power and majesty will men see Him, whom in lowly stations they refused to hear, that so much the more acutely they may feel His power, as they are now the less willing to bow the necks of their hearts to His sufferings.

21:28–33

28. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;

30. When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

33. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

Gregory. (Hom. 1. in Ev.) Having in what has gone before spoken against the reprobate, He now turns His words to the consolation of the elect; for it is added, *When these things begin to be, look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh*; as if he says, When the buffettings of the world multiply, lift up your heads, that is, rejoice your hearts, for when the world closes whose friends ye are not, the redemption is near which ye seek. For in holy Scripture the head is often put for the mind, for as the members are ruled by the head, so are the thoughts regulated by the mind. To lift up our heads then, is to raise up our minds to the joys of the heavenly country.

Eusebius. Or else, To those that have passed through the body and bodily things, shall be present spiritual and heavenly bodies: that is, they will have no more to pass the kingdom of the world, and then to those that are worthy shall be given the promises of salvation. For having received the promises of God which we look for, we who before were crooked shall be made upright, and we shall lift up our heads who were before bent low; because the redemption which we hoped for is at hand; that namely for which the whole creation waiteth.

Theophylact. That is, perfect liberty of body and soul. For as the first coming of our Lord was for the restoration of our souls, so will the second be manifested unto the restoration of our bodies.

Eusebius. He speaks these things to His disciples, not as to those who would continue in this life to the end of the world, but as if uniting in one body of believers in Christ both themselves and us and our posterity, even to the end of the world.

Gregory. (ut sup.) That the world ought to be trampled upon and despised, He proves by a wise comparison, adding, *Behold the fig tree and all the trees, when they now put forth fruit, ye know that summer is near.* As if He says, As from the fruit of the tree the summer is perceived to be near, so from the fall of the world the kingdom of God is known to be at hand. Hereby is it manifested that the world's fall is our fruit. For hereunto it puts forth buds, that whomsoever it has fostered in the bud it may consume in slaughter. But well is the kingdom of God compared to summer; for then the clouds of our sorrow flee away, and the days of life brighten up under the clear light of the Eternal Sun.

Ambrose. Matthew speaks of the fig-tree only, Luke of all the trees. But the fig-tree shadows forth two things, either the ripening of what is hard, or the luxuriance of sin; that is, either that, when the fruit bursts forth in all trees and the fruitful fig-tree abounds, (that is, when every tongue confesses God, even the Jewish people confessing Him,) we ought to hope for our Lord's coming, in which shall be gathered in as at summer the fruits of the resurrection. Or, when the man of sin shall clothe himself in his light and fickle boasting as it were the leaves of the synagogue, we must then suppose the judgment to be drawing near. For the Lord hastens to reward faith, and to bring an end of sinning.

Augustine. (ut sup.) But when He says, *When ye shall see these things to come to pass*, what can we understand but those things which were mentioned above. But among them we read, *And then shall they see the Son of man coming*. When therefore this is seen, the kingdom of God is not yet, but nigh at hand. Or must we say that we are not to understand all the things before mentioned, when He says, *When ye shall see these things, &c.* but only some of them; this for example being excepted, *And then shall they see the Son of man*. But Matthew would plainly have it taken with no exception, for he says, *And so ye, when ye see all these things*, among which is the seeing the coming of the Son of man; in order that it may be understood of that coming whereby He now comes in His members as in clouds, or in the Church as in a great cloud.

Titus Bostrensis. Or else, He says, *the kingdom of God is at hand*, meaning that when these things shall be, not yet shall all things come to their last end, but they shall be already tending towards it. For the very coming of our Lord itself, casting out every principality and power, is the preparation for the kingdom of God.

Eusebius. For as in this life, when winter dies away, and spring succeeds, the sun sending forth its warm rays cherishes and quickens the seeds hid in the ground, just laying aside their first form, and the young plants sprout forth, having put on different shades of green; so also the glorious coming of the Only-begotten of God, illuminating the new world with His quickening rays, shall bring forth into light from more excellent bodies than before the seeds that have long been hidden in the whole world, i. e. those who sleep in the dust of the earth. And having vanquished death, He shall reign from henceforth the life of the new world.

Gregory. (in Hom. 1. in Ev.) But all the things before mentioned are confirmed with great certainty, when He adds, *Verily I say unto you, &c.*

Bede. He strongly commends that which he thus foretels. And, if one may so speak, his oath is this, *Amen, I say unto you.* Amen is by interpretation "true." Therefore the truth says, *I tell you the truth*, and though He spoke not thus, He could by no means lie. But by generation he means either the whole human race, or especially the Jews.

Eusebius. Or by generation He means the new generation of His holy Church, shewing that the generation of the faithful would last up to that time, when it would see all things, and embrace with its eyes the fulfilment of our Saviour's words.

Theophylact. For because He had foretold that there should be commotions, and wars, and changes, both of the elements and in other things, lest any one might suspect that Christianity itself also would perish, He adds, *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away*: as if He said, *Though all things should be shaken, yet shall my faith fail not.* Whereby He implies that He sets the Church before the whole creation. The creation shall suffer change, but the Church of the faithful and the words of the Gospel shall abide for ever.

Gregory. (ut sup.) Or else, *The heaven and earth shall pass away, &c.* As if He says, All that with us seems lasting, does not abide to eternity without change, and all that with Me seems to pass away is held fixed and immoveable, for My word which passeth away utters sentences which remain unchangeable, and abide for ever.

Bede. But by the heaven which shall pass away we must understand not the æthereal or the starry heaven, but the air from which the birds are named "of heaven." But if the earth shall pass away, how does Ecclesiastes say, *The earth standeth for ever?* (Ecc. 1:4.) Plainly then the heaven and earth in the fashion which they now have shall pass away, but in essence subsist eternally.

21:34–36

34. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Theophylact. Our Lord declared above the fearful and sensible signs of the evils which should overtake sinners, against which the only remedy is watching and prayer, as it is said, *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time, &c.*

Basil. (Hom. 1. in illud Atten de tibi.) Every animal has within itself certain instincts which it has received from God, for the preservation of its own being. Wherefore Christ has also given us this warning, that what comes to them by nature, may be ours by the aid of reason and prudence: that we may flee from sin as the brute creatures shun deadly food, but that we seek after righteousness, as they wholesome herbs. Therefore saith He, *Take heed to yourselves*, that is, that you may distinguish the noxious from the wholesome. But since there are two ways of taking heed to ourselves, the one with the bodily eyes, the other by the faculties of the soul, and the bodily eye does not reach to virtue; it remains that we speak of the operations of the soul. *Take heed*, that is, Look around you on all sides, keeping an ever watchful eye to the guardianship of your soul. He says not, Take heed to your own or to the things around, but *to yourselves*. For ye are mind and spirit, your body is only of sense. Around you are riches, arts, and all the appendages of life, you must not mind these, but your soul, of which you must take especial care. The same admonition tends both to the healing of the sick, and the perfecting of those that are well, namely, such as are the guardians of the present, the providers of the future, not judging the actions of others, but strictly searching their own, not suffering the mind to be the slave of their passions, but subduing the irrational part of the soul to the rational. But the reason why we should take heed He adds as follows, *Lest at any time your hearts be overcharged, &c.*

Titus Bostrensis. As if He says, Beware lest the eyes of your mind wax heavy. For the cares of this life, and surfeiting, and drunkenness, scare away prudence, shatter and make shipwreck of faith.

Clement of Alexendria. (Clem. Al. lib. ii. Pædag. c. 2.) Drunkenness is an excessive use of wine; crapula[1] is the uneasiness, and nausea attendant on drunkenness, a Greek word so called from the motion of the head. And a little below. As then we must partake of food lest we suffer hunger, so also of drink lest we thirst, but with still greater care to avoid falling into excess. For the indulgence of wine is deceitful, and the soul when free from wine will be the wisest and best, but steeped in the fumes of wine is lost as in a cloud.

Basil. (in Reg. Brev. ad int. 88.) But carefulness, or the care of this life, although it seems to have nothing unlawful in it, nevertheless if it conduce not to religion, must be avoided. And the reason why He said this He shews by what comes next, *And so that day come upon you unawares.*

Theophylact. For that day will not come when men are expecting it, but unlooked for and by stealth, taking as a snare those who are unwary. *For as a snare shall it come upon all them that sit upon the face of the earth.* But this we may diligently keep far from us. For that day will take those that sit on the face of the earth, as the unthinking and slothful. But as many as are prompt and active in the way of good, not sitting and loitering on the ground, but rising from it, saying to themselves, Rise up, begone, for here there is no rest for thee. To such that day is not as a perilous snare, but a day of rejoicing.

Eusebius. He taught them therefore to take heed unto the things we have just before mentioned, lest they fall into the indolence resulting therefrom. Hence it follows, *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all those things that shall come to pass.*

Theophylact. Namely, hunger, pestilence, and such like, which for a time only threaten the elect and others, and those things also which are hereafter the lot of the guilty for ever. For these we can in no wise escape, save by watching and prayer.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. ii. c. 77.) This is supposed to be that flight which Matthew mentions; which must not be in the winter or on the sabbath day. To the winter belong the cares of this life, which are mournful as the winter, but to the sabbath surfeiting and drunkenness, which drowns and buries the heart in carnal luxury and delight, since on that day the Jews are immersed in worldly pleasure, while they are lost to a spiritual sabbath.

Theophylact. And because a Christian needs not only to flee evil, but to strive to obtain glory, He adds, *And to stand before the Son of man.* For this is the glory of angels, to stand before the Son of man, our God, and always to behold His face.

Bede. Now supposing a physician should bid us beware of the juice of a certain herb, lest a sudden death overtake us, we should most earnestly attend to his command; but when our Saviour warns us to shun drunkenness and surfeiting, and the cares of this world, men have no fear of being wounded and destroyed by them; for the faith which they put in the caution of the physician, they disdain to give to the words of God.

21:37–38

37. And in the day time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

38. And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

Bede. What our Lord commanded in word, He confirms by His example. For He who bid us watch and pray before the coming of the Judge, and the uncertain end of each of us, as the time of His Passion drew near, is Himself instant in teaching, watching, and prayer. As it is said, *And in the day time he was teaching in the temple*, whereby He conveys by His own example, that it is a thing worthy of God, to watch, or by word and deed to point out the way of truth to our neighbour.

Cyril of Alexandria. But what were the things He taught, unless such as transcended the worship of the law?

Theophylact. Now the Evangelists are silent as to the greater part of Christ's teaching; for whereas He preached for the space nearly of three years, all the teaching which they have written down would scarcely, one might say, suffice for the discourse of a single day. For out of a great many things extracting a few, they have given only a taste as it were of the sweetness of His teaching. But our Lord here instructs us, that we ought to address God at night and in silence, but in day time to be doing good to men; and to gather indeed at night, but in the day distribute what we have gathered. As it is added, *And at night he went out and abode in the mount that is called Olivet*. Not that He had need of prayer, but He did this for our example.

Cyril of Alexandria. But because His speech was with power, and with authority He applied to spiritual worship the things which had been delivered in figures by Moses and the Prophets, the people heard Him gladly. As it follows, *And the whole people made haste to come early to hear him in the temple*. But the people who came to Him before light might with fitness say, *O God my God, early do I wait upon thee.*

Bede. Now mystically, we also when amid our prosperity we behave ourselves soberly, piously, and honestly, teach by day time in the temple, for we hold up to the faithful the model of a good work; but at night we abide on mount Olivet, when in the darkness of anguish we are refreshed with spiritual consolation; and to us also the people come early in the morning, when either having shaken off the works of darkness, or scattered all the clouds of sorrow, they follow our example.

CHAP. 22

22:1–2

1. Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

2. And the Chief Priests and Scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

Chrysostom. The actions of the Jews were a shadow of our own. Accordingly if you ask of a Jew concerning the Passover, and the feast of unleavened bread, he will tell you nothing momentous, mentioning the deliverance from Egypt; whereas should a man inquire of me he would not hear of Egypt or Pharaoh, but of freedom from sin and the darkness of Satan, not by Moses, but by the Son of God;

Gloss. (non occ.) Whose Passion the Evangelist being about to relate, introduces the figure of it, saying, *Now the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.*

Bede. Now the Passover, which is called in Hebrew "Phase," is not so named from the Passion, but from the passing over, because the destroying angel, seeing the blood on the doors of the Israelites, passed over them, and touched not their first-born. Or the Lord Himself, giving assistance to His people, walked over them. But herein is the difference between the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread, that by the Passover is meant that day alone on which the lamb was slain towards the evening, that is, on the fourteenth day of the first month, but on the fifteenth, when the Israelites went out of Egypt, followed the feast of unleavened bread for seven days, up to the twenty-first of the same month. Hence the writers of the Gospel substitute one indifferently for the other. As here it is said, *The day of unleavened bread, which is called the Passover.* But it is signified by a mystery, that Christ having suffered once for us, has commanded us through the whole time of this world which is passed in seven days, to live in the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Chrysostom. Chrys. Hom. 79. in Matt.) The Chief Priests set about their impious deed on the feast, as it follows, *And the Chief Priests and Scribes, &c.* Moses ordained only one Priest, at whose death another was to be appointed. But at that time, when the Jewish customs had begun to fall away, there were many made every year. These then wishing to kill Jesus, are not afraid of God, lest in truth the holy time should aggravate the pollution of their sin, but every where fear man. Hence it follows, *For they feared the people.*

Bede. Not indeed that they apprehended sedition, but were afraid lest by the interference of the people He should be taken out of their hands. And these things Matthew reports to have taken place two days before the Passover, when they were assembled in the judgment hall of Caiaphas.

22:3–6

3. Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

4. And he went his way, and communed with the Chief Priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5. And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.

6. And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude.

Theophylact. Having already said that the Chief Priests sought means how they might slay Jesus without incurring any danger, he next goes on to relate the means which occurred to them, as it is said, *Then entered Satan into Judas.*

Titus Bostrensis. Satan entered into Judas not by force, but finding the door open. For forgetful of all that he had seen, Judas now turned his thoughts solely to covetousness.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 80. in Matt.) St. Luke gives his surname, because there was another Judas.

Titus Bostrensis. And he adds, *one of the twelve*, since he made up the number, though he did not truly discharge the Apostolic office. Or the Evangelist adds this, as it were for contrast sake. As if he said, "He was of the first band of those who were especially chosen."

Bede. There is nothing contrary to this in what John says, that after the sop Satan entered into Judas; seeing he now entered into him as a stranger, but then as his own, whom he might lead after him to do whatsoever he willed.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) Observe the exceeding iniquity of Judas, that he both sets out by himself, and that he does this for gain. It follows, *And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains.*

Theophylact. The magistrates here mentioned were those appointed to take care of the buildings of the temple, or it may be those whom the Romans had set over the people to keep them from breaking forth into tumult; for they were seditious.

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) By covetousness then Judas became what he was, for it follows, *And they covenanted to give him money.* Such are the evil passions which covetousness engenders, it makes men irreligious, and compels them to lose all knowledge of God, though they have received a thousand benefits from Him, nay, even to injure Him, as it follows, *And he contracted with them.*

Theophylact. That is, he bargained and promised. *And sought opportunity to betray him unto them*, without the crowds, that is, when he saw Him standing by Himself apart, in the absence of the multitude.

Bede. Now many shudder at the wickedness of Judas, yet do not guard against it. For whosoever despises the laws of truth and love, betrays Christ who is truth and love. Above all, when he sins not from infirmity or ignorance, but after the likeness of Judas seeks opportunity, when no one is present, to change truth for a lie, virtue for crime.

22:7–13

7. Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed.

8. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat.

9. And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10. And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?

12. And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13. And they went, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover.

Titus Bostrensis. Our Lord, in order to leave us a heavenly Passover, ate a typical one, removing the figure, that the truth might take its place.

Bede. By the day of unleavened bread of the Passover, He means the fourteenth day of the first month, the day on which, having put away the leaven, they were accustomed to hold the Passover, that is, the lamb, towards evening.

Eusebius. But should any one say, "If on the first day of unleavened bread the disciples of our Saviour prepare the Passover, on that day then should we also celebrate the Passover;" we answer, that this was not an admonition, but a history of the fact. It is what took place at the time of the saving Passion; but it is one thing to relate past events, another to sanction and leave them an ordinance to posterity. Moreover, the Saviour did not keep His Passover with the Jews at the time that they sacrificed the lamb. For they did this on the Preparation, when our Lord suffered. Therefore they entered not into the hall of Pilate, that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover. (John 18:28.) For from the time that they conspired against the truth, they drove far from them the Word of truth. Nor on the first day of unleavened bread, on which the Passover ought to be sacrificed, did they eat their accustomed Passover, for they were intent upon something else, but on the day after, which was the second of unleavened bread. But our Lord on the first day of unleavened bread, that is, on the fifth day of the week, kept the Passover with His disciples.

Theophylact. Now on the same fifth day He sends two of His disciples to prepare the Passover, namely, Peter and John, the one in truth as loving, the other as loved. In all things shewing, that even to the end of His life He opposed not the law. And He sends them to a strange house; for He and His disciples had no house, else would He have kept the Passover in one of them. So it is added, *And they said, Where will thou that we prepare?*

Bede. As if to say, We have no abode, we have no place of shelter. Let those hear this, who busy themselves in building houses. Let them know that Christ, the Lord of all places, had not where to lay His head.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 81. in Matt.) But as they knew not to whom they were sent, He gave them a sign, as Samuel to Saul, as it follows, *And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.* (1 Sam. 10:3.)

Ambrose. First observe the greatness of His divine power. He is talking with His disciples, yet knows what will happen in another place. Next behold His condescension, in that He chooses not the person of the rich or powerful, but seeks after the poor, and prefers a mean inn to the spacious palaces of nobles. Now the Lord was not ignorant of the name of the man whose mystery He knew, and that he would meet the disciples, but he is mentioned without a name, that he may be counted as ignoble.

Theophylact. He sends them for this reason to an unknown man: to shew them that He voluntarily underwent His Passion, since He who so swayed the mind of one unknown to Him, that He should receive them, was able to deal with the Jews just as He wished. But some say that He gave not the name of the man, lest the traitor knowing his name might open the house to the Pharisees, and they should have come and taken Him before that the supper was eaten, and He had delivered the spiritual mysteries to His disciples. But He directs them by particular signs to a certain house; whence it follows, *And ye shall say to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, &c. And he will shew you an upper room, &c.*

Gloss. (non occ.) And perceiving these signs, the disciples zealously fulfilled all that had been commanded them; as it follows, *And they went, and found as he had said unto them, and made ready the Passover.*

Bede. To explain this Passover, the Apostle says, *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.* (1 Cor. 5:7.) Which Passover in truth must needs have been slain there, as it was so ordained by the Father's counsel and determination. And thus although on the next day, that is, the fifteenth, He was crucified, yet, on this night on which the lamb was slain by the Jews, being seized and bound, He consecrated the beginning of His sacrifice, that is, of His Passion.

Theophylact. By the day of unleavened bread, we must understand that conversation which is wholly in the light of the Spirit, having lost all trace of the old corruption of Adam's first transgression. And living in this conversation, it becomes us to rejoice in the mysteries of Christ. Now these mysteries Peter and John prepare, that is, action and contemplation, fervid zeal and peaceful meekness. And these preparers a certain man meets, because in what we have just mentioned, lies the condition of man who was created after the image of God. And he carries a pitcher of water, which signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit. But the pitcher is humbleness of heart; for He giveth grace to the humble, who know themselves to be but earth and dust.

Ambrose. Or the pitcher is a more perfect measure, but the water is that which was thought meet to be a sacrament of Christ; to wash, not to be washed.

Bede. They prepare the Passover in that house, whither the pitcher of water is carried, for the time is at hand in which to the keepers of the true Passover, the typical blood is taken away from the lintel, and the baptism of the lifegiving fountain is consecrated to take away sin.

Origen. (in Matt. 26:18.) But I think that the man who meets the disciples as they enter into the city, carrying a pitcher of water, was some servant of a master of a house, carrying water in an earthen vessel either for washing or for drinking. And this I think is Moses conveying the spiritual doctrine in fleshly histories. But they who follow him not, do not celebrate the Passover with Jesus. Let us then ascend with the Lord united to us, to the upper part in which is the guestchamber, which is shewn by the understanding, that is, the goodman of the house, to every one of the disciples of Christ. But this upper room of our house must be large enough to receive Jesus the Word of God, who is not comprehended but by those who are greater in comprehension. And this chamber must be made ready by the goodman of the house, (that is, the understanding,) for the Son of God, and it must be cleaned, wholly purged of the filth of malice. The master of the house also must not be any common person having a known name. Hence He says

mystically in Matthew, *Go ye to such a one.*

Ambrose. Now in the upper parts he has a large room furnished, that you may consider how great were his merits in whom the Lord could sit down with His disciples, rejoicing in His exalted virtues.

Origen. (ut sup.) But we should know that they who are taken up with banquetings and worldly cares do not ascend into that upper part of the house, and therefore do not keep the Passover with Jesus. For after the words of the disciples wherewith they questioned the goodman of the house, (that is, the understanding,) the Divine Person came into that house to feast there with His disciples.

22:14–18

14. And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:

16. For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

18. For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

Cyril of Alexandria. As soon as the disciples had prepared the Passover, they proceed to eat it; as it is said, *And when the hour was come, &c.*

Bede. By the hour of eating the Passover, He signifies the fourteenth day of the first month, far gone towards evening, the fifteenth moon just appearing on the earth.

Theophylact. But how is our Lord said to sit down, whereas the Jews eat the Passover standing? They say, that when they had eaten the legal Passover, they sat down, according to the common custom, to eat their other food.

It follows, *And he said unto them, With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you, &c.*

Cyril of Alexandria. He says this, because the covetous disciple was looking out for the time for betraying Him; but that he might not betray Him before the feast of the Passover, our Lord had not divulged either the house, or the man with whom He should keep the Passover. That this was the cause is very evident from these words.

Theophylact. Or He says, *With desire have I desired*; as if to say, This is My last supper with you, therefore it is most precious and welcome to Me; just as those who are going away to a distance, utter the last words to their friends most affectionately.

Chrysostom. Or He says this, because after that Passover the Cross was at hand. But we find Him frequently prophesying of His own Passion, and desiring it to take place.

Bede. He first then desires to eat the typical Passover, and so to declare the mysteries of His Passion to the world.

Eusebius. Or else; When our Lord was celebrating the new Passover, He fitly said, *With desire have I desired this Passover*, that is, the new mystery of the New Testament which He gave to His disciples, and which many prophets and righteous men desired before Him. He then also Himself thirsting for the common salvation, delivered this mystery, to suffice for the whole world. But the Passover was ordained by Moses to be celebrated in one place, that is, in Jerusalem. Therefore it was not adapted for the whole world, and so was not desired.

Epiphanius. (adv. Hær. 30. 22.) Hereby we may refute the folly of the Ebionites concerning the eating of flesh, seeing that our Lord eats the Passover of the Jews. Therefore He pointedly said, "This Passover," that no one might transfer it to mean another.

Bede. Thus then was our Lord the approver of the legal Passover; and as He taught that it related to the figure of His own dispensation, He forbids it henceforth to be represented in the flesh. Therefore He adds, *For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.* That is, I will no more celebrate the Mosaic Passover, until, being spiritually understood, it is fulfilled in the Church. For the Church is the kingdom of God; as in Luke, *The kingdom of God is within you.* (Luke 17:21.) Again, the ancient Passover, which He desired to bring to an end, is also alluded to in what follows; *And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take ye, &c.* For this gave He thanks, that the old things were about to pass away, and all things to become new.

Chrysostom. (conc. de Laz.) Remember then when thou sittest down to meat that after the meal thou must pray; therefore satisfy thy hunger, but with moderation, lest being overcharged thou shouldest not be able to bend thy knees in supplication and prayer to God. Let us not then after our meals turn to sleep, but to prayer. For Christ plainly signifies this, that the partaking of food should not be followed by sleep or rest, but by prayer and reading the holy Scripture. It follows, *For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God come.*

Bede. This may be also taken literally, for from the hour of supper up to the time of resurrection He was about to drink no wine. Afterwards He partook both of meat and drink, as Peter testifies, *Who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.* (Acts 10:41.)

Theophylact. The resurrection is called the kingdom of God, because it has destroyed death. Therefore David also says, *The Lord reigneth: He hath put on beauty*, (Ps. 93:1.) that is, a beautiful robe, *having put off the corruption of the flesh.* (Isa. 63:1.) But when the resurrection comes, He again drinks with His disciples; to prove that the resurrection was not a shadow only.

Bede. But it is far more natural, that as before of the typical lamb, so now also of the drink of the Passover, He should say that He would no more taste, until the glory of the kingdom of God being made manifest, the faith of the whole world should appear; that so by means of the spiritual changing of the two greatest commands of the law, namely, the eating and drinking of the Passover, you might learn that all the Sacraments of the law were to be transferred to a spiritual observance.

19. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Bede. Having finished the rites of the old Passover, He passes on to the new, which He desires the Church to celebrate in memory of His redemption, substituting for the flesh and blood of the lamb, the Sacrament of His own Flesh and Blood in the figure of the bread and wine, *being made a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech.* (Ps. 110:4.) Hence it is said, *And he took bread, and gave thanks*, (Heb. 7:21.) as also He had given thanks upon finishing the old feast, leaving us an example to glorify God at the beginning and end of every good work. It follows, *And brake it.* He Himself breaks the bread which He holds forth, to shew that the breaking of His Body, that is, His Passion, will not be without His will. *And gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you.*

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. de Bapt. Christ.) For the bread before the consecration is common bread, but when the mystery has consecrated it, it is, and it is called, the Body of Christ.

Cyril of Alexandria. (in Luc.) Nor doubt that this is true; for He plainly says, *This is my body*; but rather receive the words of thy Saviour in faith. For since He is the Truth, He lies not. (Ep. ad Calosyr.). [a] They rave foolishly then who say that the mystical blessing loses its power of sanctifying, if any remains are left till the following day. For the most holy Body of Christ will not be changed, but the power of blessing and the life-giving grace is ever abiding in it. (in Luc. ut sup.). For the life-giving power of God the Father is the only-begotten Word, which was made flesh not ceasing to be the Word, but making the flesh life-giving. What then? since we have in us the life of God, the Word of God dwelling in us, will our body be life-giving? But it is one thing for us by the habit of participation to have in ourselves the Son of God, another for Himself to have been made flesh, that is, to have made the body which He took from the pure Virgin His own Body. He must needs then be in a certain manner united to our bodies by His holy Body and precious Blood, which we have received for a life-giving blessing in the bread and wine. For lest we should be shocked, seeing the Flesh and Blood placed on the holy altars, God, in compassion to our infirmities, pours into the offerings the power of life, changing them into the reality of His own flesh, that the body of life may be found in us, as it were a certain life-giving seed. He adds. *Do this in commemoration of me.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 46. in Joan.) Christ did this to bring us to a closer bond of friendship, and to betoken His love toward us, giving Himself to those who desire Him, not only to behold Him, but also to handle Him, to eat Him, to embrace Him with the fulness of their whole heart. Therefore as lions breathing fire do we depart from that table, rendered objects of terror to the devil.

Basil. (Moral. Reg. 21. c. 3. Reg. Brev. ad int. 172.) Learn then in what manner you ought to eat the Body of Christ, namely, in remembrance of Christ's obedience even unto death, that they who live may no more live in themselves, but in Him who died for them, and rose again. (2 Cor. 5:15.)

Theophylact. Now Luke mentions two cups; of the one we spoke above, *Take this, and divide it among yourselves*, which we may say is a type of the Old Testament; but the other after the breaking and giving of bread, He Himself imparts to His disciples. Hence it is added, *Likewise also the cup after supper.*

Bede. *He gave to them*, is here understood to complete the sentence.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 1.) Or because Luke has twice mentioned the cup, first before Christ gave the bread, then after He had given it, on the first occasion he has anticipated, as he frequently does, but on the second that which he has placed in its natural order, he had made no mention of before. But both joined together make the same sense which we find in the others, that is, Matthew and Mark.

Theophylact. Our Lord calls the cup the New Testament, as it follows, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which shall be shed for you*, signifying that the New Testament has its beginning in His blood. For in the Old Testament the blood of animals was present when the law was given, but now the blood of the Word of God signifies to us the New Testament. But when He says, *for you*, He does not mean that for the Apostles only was His Body given, and His Blood poured out, but for the sake of all mankind. And the old Passover was ordained to remove the slavery of Egypt; but the blood of the lamb to protect the first-born. The new Passover was ordained to the remission of sins; but the Blood of Christ to preserve those who are dedicated to God.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 46. in Joan.) For this Blood moulds in us a royal image, it suffers not our nobleness of soul to waste away, moreover it refreshes the soul, and inspires it with great virtue. This Blood puts to flight the devils, summons angels, and the Lord of angels. This Blood poured forth washed the world, and made heaven open. They that partake of it are built up with heavenly virtues, and arrayed in the royal robes of Christ; yea rather clothed upon by the King Himself. And since if thou comest clean, thou comest healthfully; so if polluted by an evil conscience, thou comest to thy own destruction, to pain and torment. For if they who defile the imperial purple are smitten with the same punishment as those who tear it asunder, it is not unreasonable that they who with an unclean heart receive Christ should be beaten with the same stripes as they were who pierced Him with nails.

Bede. Because the bread strengthens, and the wine produces blood in the flesh, the former is ascribed to the Body of Christ, the latter to His Blood. But because both we ought to abide in Christ, and Christ in us, the wine of the Lord's cup is mixed with water, for John bears witness, *The people are many waters.* (Rev. 17:15.)

Theophylact. But first the bread is given, next the cup. For in spiritual things labour and action come first, that is, the bread, not only because it is toiled for by the sweat of the brow, but also because while being eaten it is not easy to swallow. Then after labour follows the rejoicing of Divine grace, which is the cup.

Bede. For this reason then the Apostles communicated after supper, because it was necessary that the typical passover should be first completed, and then they should pass on to the Sacrament of the true Passover. But now in honour of so great a Sacrament, the masters of the Church think right that we should first be refreshed with the spiritual banquet, and afterward with the earthly.

Greek Expositor. (Eutychius Patriarch.) He that communicates receives the whole Body and Blood of our Lord, even though he receive but a part of the Mysteries. For as one seal imparts the whole of its device to different substances, and yet remains entire after distribution, and as one word penetrates to the hearing of many, so there is no doubt that the Body and Blood of our Lord is received whole in all. But the breaking of the sacred bread signifies the

Passion.

22:21–23

21. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

22. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed.

23. And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. iii. c. 1.) When our Lord had given the cup to His disciples, He again spoke of His betrayer, saying, *But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me, &c.*

Theophylact. And this He said not only to shew that He knew all things, but also to declare unto us His own especial goodness, in that He left nothing undone of those things which belonged to Him to do; (for He gives us an example, that even unto the end we should be employed in reclaiming sinners;) and moreover to point out the baseness of the traitor who blushed not to be His guest.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 82. in Matt.) Yet though partaking of the mystery, he was not converted. Nay, his wickedness is made only the more awful, as well because under the pollution of such a design, he came to the mystery, as that coming he was not made better, either by fear, gratitude, or respect.

Bede. And yet our Lord does not especially point him out, lest being so plainly detected, he might only become the more shameless. But He throws the charge on the whole twelve, that the guilty one might be turned to repentance. He also proclaims his punishment, that the man whom shame had not prevailed upon, might by the sentence denounced against him be brought to amendment. Hence it follows, *And truly the Son of man goeth, &c.*

Theophylact. Not as if unable to preserve Himself, but as determining for Himself to suffer death for the salvation of man.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 81. in Matt.) Because then Judas in the things which are written of him acted with an evil purpose, in order that no one might deem him guiltless, as being the minister of the dispensation, Christ adds, *Woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed.*

Bede. But woe also to that man, who coining unworthily to the Table of our Lord, after the example of Judas, betrays the Son, not indeed to Jews, but to sinners, that is, to his own sinful members. Although the eleven Apostles knew that they were meditating nothing against their Lord, yet notwithstanding because they trust more to their Master than themselves, fearing their own infirmities, they ask concerning a sin of which they had no consciousness.

Basil. (in Reg. Brev. ad int. 301.) For as in bodily diseases there are many of which the affected are not sensible, but they rather put faith in the opinion of their physicians, than trust their own insensibility; so also in the diseases of the soul, though a man is not conscious of sin in himself, yet ought he to trust to those who are able to have more knowledge of their own sins.

22:24–27

24. And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25. And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Theophylact. While they were enquiring among themselves who should betray the Lord, they would naturally go on to say to one another, "Thou art the traitor," and so become impelled to say, "I am the best, I am the greatest." Hence it is said, *And there was also a strife among them which should be accounted the greatest.*

Greek Expositor. (Apollinarius in loc.) Or the strife seems to have arisen from this, that when our Lord was departing from the world, it was thought that some one must become their head, as taking our Lord's place.

Bede. As good men seek in the Scriptures the examples of their fathers, that they may thereby gain profit and be humbled, so the bad, if by chance they have discovered any thing blameable in the elect, most gladly seize upon it, to shelter their own iniquities thereby. Many therefore most eagerly read, that a strife arose among the disciples of Christ.

Ambrose. If the disciples did contend, it is not alleged as any excuse, but held out as a warning. Let us then beware lest any contentions among us for precedence be our ruin.

Bede. Rather let us look not what carnal disciples did, but what their spiritual Master commanded; for it follows, *And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles, &c.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 65. in Matt.) He mentions the Gentiles, to shew thereby how faulty it was. For it is of the Gentiles to seek after precedence.

Cyril of Alexandria. Soft words are also given them by their subjects, as it follows, *And they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.* Now they truly as alien from the sacred law are subject to these evils, but your preeminence is in humility, as it follows, *But ye shall not be so.*

Basil. (in Reg. fus. dis. int. 30.) Let not him that is chief be puffed up by his dignity, lest he fall away from the blessedness of humility, but let him know that true humility is the ministering unto many. As then he who attends many wounded and wipes away the blood from their wounds, least of all men enters upon the service for his own exaltation, much more ought he to whom is committed the care of his sick brethren as the minister of all, about to render an account of all, to be thoughtful and anxious. And so let him that is greatest be as the younger. (ad int. 31.). Again, it is meet that those who are in the chief places should be ready to offer also bodily service, after our Lord's example, who washed His disciples' feet. Hence it follows, *And he that is chief, as he that doth serve.* But we need not fear that the spirit of humility will be weakened in the inferior, while he is being served by his superior,

for by imitation humility is extended.

Ambrose. But it must be observed, that not every kind of respect and deference to others betokens humility, for you may defer to a person for the world's sake, for fear of his power, or regard to your own interest. In that case you seek to advance yourself, not to honour another. Therefore there is one form of the precept given to all men, namely, that they boast not about precedence, but strive earnestly for humility.

Bede. In this rule however, given by our Lord, the great have need of no little judgment, that they do not indeed like the kings of the Gentiles delight to tyrannize over their subjects, and be puffed up with their praises, yet notwithstanding that they be provoked with a righteous zeal against the wickedness of offenders.

But to the words of the exhortation He subjoins His own example, as it follows, *For which is greater, he who sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? But I am among you, &c.*

Chrysostom. As if He says, Think not that thy disciple needs you, but that you do not need him. For I who need no one whom all things in heaven and earth need, have condescended to the degree of a servant.

Theophylact. He shews Himself to be their servant, when He distributes the bread and the cup, of which service He makes mention, reminding them that if they have eaten of the same bread, and drunk of the same cup, if Christ Himself served all, they ought all to think the same things.

Bede. Or He speaks of that service wherewith, according to John, He their Lord and Master washed their feet. Although by the word itself *serving*, (John 13:5.) all that He did in the flesh may be implied, but by serving He also signifies that He poureth forth His blood for us.

22:28–30

28. Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations.

29. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30. That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Theophylact. As the Lord had denounced woe to the traitor, so on the other hand to the rest of the disciples He promises blessings, saying, *Ye are they which have continued with me, &c.*

Bede. For not the first effort of patience, but long-continued perseverance, is rewarded with the glory of the heavenly kingdom, for perseverance, (which is called constancy or fortitude of mind,) is, so to say, the pillar and prop of all virtues. The Son of God then conducts those who abide with Him in His temptations to the everlasting kingdom. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* (Rom. 6:5.) Hence it follows, *And I give to you a kingdom, &c.*

Ambrose. The kingdom of God is not of this world, But it is not equality with God, but likeness to Him, unto which man must aspire. For Christ alone is the full image of God, on account of the unity of His Father's glory expressed in Him. But the righteous man is after the image of God, if for the sake of imitating the likeness of the Divine conversation, He through the knowledge of God despises the world. Therefore also we eat the Body and Blood of Christ, that we may be partakers of eternal life. Whence it follows, *That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.* For the reward promised to us is not food and drink, but the communication of heavenly grace and life.

Bede. Or the table offered to all saints richly to enjoy is the glory of a heavenly life, wherewith they who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled, resting in the long-desired enjoyment of the true God. (Matt. 5:6.)

Theophylact. He said this not as if they would have there bodily food, or as if His kingdom were to be a sensible one. For their life then shall be the life of angels, as He before told the Sadducees. (Mat. 22:30, Luke 20:36) But Paul also says that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink. (Rom. 14:17.)

Cyril of Alexandria. By means of the things of our present life He describes spiritual things. For they exercise a high privilege with earthly kings, who sit at their table as guests. So then by man's estimation He shews who shall be rewarded by Him with the greatest honours.

Bede. This then is the exchange to the right hand of the Most High, (Ps. 118:15.) that those who now in lowliness rejoice to minister to their fellow-servants, shall then at our Lord's table on high be fed with the banquet of everlasting life, and they who here in temptations abide with the Lord being unjustly judged, shall then come with Him as just judges upon their tempters. Hence it follows, *And sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Theophylact. That is, the unbelievers condemned out of the twelve tribes.

Ambrose. But the twelve thrones are not as it were any resting-places for the bodily posture, but because since Christ judges after the Divine likeness by knowledge of the hearts, not by examination of the actions, rewarding virtue, condemning iniquity; so the Apostles are appointed to a spiritual judgment, for the rewarding of faith, the condemnation of unbelief, repelling error with virtue, inflicting vengeance on the sacrilegious.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 64. in Matt.) What then will Judas also sit there? Observe what the law was which God gave by Jeremiah, *If I have promised any good, and thou art counted unworthy of it, I will punish you.* (Jerem. 18:10.) Therefore speaking to His disciples He did not make a general promise, but added, *Ye who have continued with me in my temptations.*

Bede. From the high excellence of this promise Judas is excluded. For before the Lord said this, Judas must be supposed to have gone out. They also are excluded whoever having heard the words of the incomprehensible Sacrament, have gone backwards. (John 6:67.)

22:31–34

31. And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32. But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33. And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34. And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

Bede. Lest the eleven should be boastful, and impute it to their own strength, that they almost alone among so many thousands of the Jews were said to have continued with our Lord in His temptations, He shews them, that if they had not been protected by the aid of their Master succouring them, they would have been beaten down by the same storm as the rest. Hence it follows, *And the Lord said unto Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired thee, that he may sift thee as wheat.* That is, he hath longed to tempt you and to shake you, as he who cleanses wheat by winnowing. Wherein He teaches that no man's faith is tried unless God permits it.

Theophylact. Now this was said to Peter, because he was bolder than the rest, and might feel proud because of the things which Christ had promised.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or to shew that men being as nought, (as regards human nature, and the proneness of our minds to fall,) it is not meet that they should wish to be above their brethren. Therefore passing by all the others, He comes to Peter, who was the chief of them, saying, *But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 82. in Matt.) Now He said not, 'I have granted,' but *I have prayed.* For He speaks humbly as approaching unto His Passion, and that He may manifest His human nature. For He who had spoken not in supplication, but by authority, *Upon this rock I will build my Church, and I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, (Matt. 16:18.) how should He have need of prayer that He might stay one agitated soul? He does not say, "I have prayed that thou deny not," but that thou do not abandon thy faith.

Theophylact. For albeit thou art for a time shaken, yet thou boldest stored up, a seed of faith; though the spirit has shed its leaves in temptation, yet the root is firm. Satan then seeks to harm thee, because he is envious of my love for thee, but notwithstanding that I have prayed for thee, thou shalt fall. Hence it follows, *And when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.* As if He says, After that thou hast wept and repented thy denial of Me, strengthen thy brethren, for I have deputed thee to be the head of the Apostles. For this befits thee who art with Me, the strength and rock of the Church. And this must be understood not only of the Apostles who then were, but of all the faithful who were about to be, even to the end of the world; that none of the believers might despair, seeing that Peter though an Apostle denied his Lord, yet afterwards by penitence obtained the high privilege of being the Ruler (ἐπιστάτης) of the world.

Cyril of Alexandria. Marvel then at the superabundance of the Divine forbearance: lest He should cause a disciple to despair, before the crime was committed, He granted pardon, and again restored him to his Apostolic rank, saying, *Strengthen thy brethren.*

Bede. As if to say, As I by prayer protected your faith that it should not fail, so do you remember to sustain the weaker brethren, that they despair not of pardon.

Ambrose. Beware then of boasting, beware of the world; he is commanded to strengthen his own brethren, who said, *Master, we have left all, and followed thee.* (Matt. 19:27.)

Bede. Because the Lord said He had prayed for Peter's faith, Peter conscious of present affection and fervent faith, but unconscious of his coming fall, does not believe he could in any way fall from Christ. As it follows, *And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee to prison and to death.*

Theophylact. He burns forth indeed with too much love, and promises what is impossible to him. But it behoved him as soon as he heard from the Truth that he was to be tempted, to be no longer confident. Now the Lord, seeing that Peter spoke boastfully, reveals the nature of his temptation, namely, that he would deny Him; *I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou thrice deny, &c.*

Ambrose. Now Peter although earnest in spirit, yet still weak in bodily inclination, is declared about to deny his Lord; for he could not equal the constancy of the Divine will. Our Lord's Passion has rivals, but no equal.

Theophylact. From hence we draw a great doctrine, that human resolve is not sufficient without the Divine support. For Peter with all his zeal, nevertheless when forsaken of God was overthrown by the enemy.

Basil. (in Reg. Brev. ad int. 8.) We must know then, that God sometimes allows the rash to receive a fall, as a remedy to previous self-confidence. But although the rash man seems to have committed the same offence with other men, there is no slight difference. For the one has sinned by reason of certain secret assaults and almost against his will, but the others, having no care either for themselves or God, knowing no distinction between sin and virtuous actions. For the rash needing some assistance, in regard to this very thing in which he has sinned ought to suffer reproof. But the others, having destroyed all the good of their soul, must be afflicted, warned, rebuked, or made subject to punishment, until they acknowledge that God is a just Judge, and tremble.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. iii. c. 2.) Now what is here said concerning the foregoing denial of Peter is contained in all the Evangelists, but they do not all happen to relate it upon the same occasion in the discourse. Matthew and Mark subjoin it after our Lord had departed from the house where He had eaten the Passover, but Luke and John before He went out from thence. But we may easily understand either that the two former used these words, recapitulating them, or the two others anticipating them: only it rather moves us, that not only the words but even the sentences of our Lord, in which Peter being troubled used that boast of dying either for or with our Lord, are given so differently, as rather to compel us to believe that he thrice uttered his boast at different parts of our Lord's discourse, and that he was thrice answered by our Lord, that before the cock crowed he should deny Him thrice.

22:35–38

35. And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

36. Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

37. For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

38. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

Cyril of Alexandria. Our Lord had foretold to Peter that he should deny Him; namely, at the time of His being taken. But having once made mention of His being taken captive, He next announces the struggle that would ensue against the Jews. Hence it is said, *And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, &c.* For the Saviour had sent the holy Apostles to preach in the cities and towns the kingdom of heaven, bidding them to take no thought of the things of the body, but to place their whole hope of salvation in Him.

Chrysostom. (in illud ad Rom. 16. Salutate Priscillam.) Now as one who teaches to swim, at first indeed placing his hands under his pupils, carefully supports them, but afterward frequently withdrawing his hand, bids them help themselves, nay even lets them sink a little; so likewise did Christ deal with His disciples. At the beginning truly He was present to them, giving them most richly abundance of all things; as it follows, *And they said unto them, Nothing*. But when it was necessary for them to shew their own strength, He withdrew from them for a little His grace, bidding them do something of themselves; as it follows, *But now he that hath a purse*, that is, wherein to carry money, *let him take it, and likewise his scrip*, that is, to carry provisions in. And truly when they had neither shoes, nor girdle, nor staff, nor money, they never suffered the want of any thing. But when He allowed them purse and scrip, they seem to suffer hunger, and thirst, and nakedness. As if He said to them, Hitherto all things have been most richly supplied to you, but now I would have you also experience poverty, therefore I hold you no longer to the former rule, but I command you to get purse and scrip. Now God might even to the end have kept them in plenty, but for many reasons He was unwilling to do so. First that they might impute nothing to themselves, but acknowledge that every thing flowed from God; secondly, that they might learn moderation; thirdly, that they might not think too highly of themselves. For this cause while He permitted them to fall into many unlooked for evils, He relaxed the rigour of the former law, lest it should become grievous and intolerable.

Bede. For He does not train His disciples in the same rule of life, in time of persecution, as in the time of peace. When He sent them to preach, He ordered them to take nothing in the way, ordaining in truth, that He who preaches the Gospel should live by the Gospel. But when the crisis of death was at hand, and the whole nation persecuted both the shepherd and the flock, He proposes a law adapted to the time, allowing them to take the necessaries of life, until the rage of the persecutors was abated, and the time of preaching the Gospel had returned. Herein He leaves us also an example, that at times when a just reason urges, we may intermit without blame somewhat of the strictness of our determination.

Augustine. (cont. Faust. lib. xxii. c. 77.) By no inconsistency then of Him who commands, but by the reason of the dispensation, according to the diversity of times are commandments, counsels, or permissions changed.

Ambrose. But He who forbids to strike, why does He order them to buy a sword? unless perchance that there may be a defence prepared, but no necessary retaliation; a seeming ability to be revenged, without the will. Hence it follows, *And he who has not*, (that is, a purse,) *let him sell his garment, and buy a sword.*

Chrysostom. What is, this? He who said, *If any one strike you on the right cheek, turn unto him the other also*, (Matt. 5:39.) now arms His disciples, and with a sword only. For if it were fitting to be completely armed, not only must a man possess a sword, but shield and helmet. But even though a thousand had arms of this kind, how could the eleven be prepared for all the attacks and lying in wait of people, tyrants, allies, and nations, and how should they not quake at the mere sight of armed men, who had been brought up near lakes and rivers? We must not then suppose that He ordered them to possess swords, but by the swords He points at the secret attack of the Jews. And hence it follows, *For I say unto you, that this that is written must be accomplished in me: And he was numbered with the transgressors*. (Isa. 53:12.)

Theophylact. While they were contending among themselves above concerning priority, He saith, It is not a time of dignities, but rather of danger and slaughter. Behold I even your Master am led to a disgraceful death, to be reckoned with the transgressors. For these things which are prophesied of Me have an end, that is, a fulfilment. Wishing then to hint at a violent attack, He made mention of a sword, not altogether revealing it, lest they should be seized with dismay, nor did He entirely provide that they should not be shaken by these sudden attacks, but that afterwards recovering, they might marvel how He gave Himself up to the Passion, a ransom for the salvation of men.

Basil. (Reg. Brev. int. 31.) Or the Lord does not bid them carry purse and scrip and buy a sword, but predicts that it should come to pass, that in truth the Apostles, forgetful of the time of the Passion, of the gifts and law of their Lord, would dare to take up the sword. For often does the Scripture make use of the imperative form of speech in the place of prophecy. Still in many books we do not find, *Let him take, or buy*, but, he will take, he will buy.

Theophylact. Or He hereby foretels to them that they would incur hunger and thirst, which He implies by the scrip, and sundry kinds of misery, which he intends by the sword.

Cyril of Alexandria. Or else; When our Lord says, *He who hath a purse, let him take it, likewise a scrip*, His discourse He addressed to His disciples, but in reality He regards every individual Jew; as if He says, If any Jew is rich in resources, let him collect them together and fly. But if any one oppressed with extreme poverty applies himself to religion, let him also sell his cloak and buy a sword. For the terrible attack of battle shall overtake them, so that nothing shall suffice to resist it. He next lays open the cause of these evils, namely, that He suffered the penalty due to the wicked, being crucified with thieves. And when it shall have come at last to this, the word of dispensation will receive its end. But to the persecutors shall happen all that has been foretold by the Prophets. These things then God prophesied concerning what should befall the country of the Jews, but the disciples understood not the depth of His words, thinking they had need of swords against the coming attack of the traitor. Whence it follows; *But they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords.*

Chrysostom. And in truth, if He wished them to use human aid, not a hundred swords would have sufficed; but if He willed not the assistance of man, even two are superfluous.

Theophylact. Our Lord then was unwilling to blame them as not understanding Him, but saying, *It is enough*, He dismissed them; as when we are addressing any one, and see that he does not understand what is said, we say, Well, let us leave him, lest we trouble him. But some say, that our Lord said, *It is enough*, ironically; as if He said, Since there are two swords, they will amply suffice against so large a multitude as is about to attack us.

Bede. Or the two swords suffice for a testimony that Jesus suffered voluntarily. The one indeed was to teach the Apostles the presumption of their contending for their Lord, and His inherent virtue of healing; the other never taken out of its sheath, to shew that they were not even permitted to do all that they could for His defence.

Ambrose. Or, because the law does not forbid to return a blow, perhaps He says to Peter, as he is offering the two swords, *It is enough*, as though it were

lawful until the Gospel; in order that there may be in the law, the knowledge of justice; in the Gospel, perfection of goodness. There is also a spiritual sword, that you may sell your patrimony, and buy the word, by which the nakedness of the soul is clothed. There is also a sword of suffering, so that you may strip your body, and with the spoils of your sacrificed flesh purchase for yourself the sacred crown of martyrdom. Again it moves, seeing that the disciples put forward two swords, whether perhaps one is not of the Old Testament, the other of the New, whereby we are armed against the wiles of the devil. Therefore the Lord says, *It is enough*, because he wanted nothing who is fortified by the teaching of both Testaments.

22:39–42

39. And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him.

40. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

41. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

42. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

Bede. As He was to be betrayed by His disciple, our Lord goes to the place of His wonted retirement, where He might most easily be found; as it follows, *And he came out, and went, as he was want, to the mount of Olives.*

Cyril of Alexandria. By day He was in Jerusalem, but when the darkness of night came on He held converse with His disciples on the mount of Olives; as it is added, *And his disciples followed.*

Bede. Rightly does He lead the disciples, about to be instructed in the mysteries of His Body, to the mount of Olives, that He might signify that all who are baptized in His death should be comforted with the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Theophylact. Now after supper our Lord betakes Himself not to idleness or sleep, but to prayer and teaching. Hence it follows, *And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray, &c.*

Bede. It is indeed impossible for the soul of man not to be tempted. Therefore he says not, Pray that ye be not tempted, but, *Pray that ye enter not into temptation*, that is, that the temptation do not at last overcome you.

Cyril of Alexandria. But not to do good by words only, He went forward a little and prayed; as it follows, *And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast.* You will every where find Him praying apart, to teach you that with a devout mind and quiet heart we should speak with the most high God. He did not betake Himself to prayer, as if He was in want of another's help, who is the Almighty power of the Father, but that we may learn not to slumber in temptation, but rather to be instant in prayer.

Bede. He also alone prays for all, who was to suffer alone for all, signifying that His prayer is as far distant from ours as His Passion.

Augustine. (de Qu. Evang. lib. ii. qu. 50.) He was torn from them about a stone's cast, as though He would typically remind them that to Him they should point the stone, that is, up to Him bring the intention of the law which was written on stone.

Gregory of Nyssa. But what meaneth His bending of knees? of which it is said, *And he kneeled down, and prayed.* It is the way of men to pray to their superiors with their faces on the ground, testifying by the action that the greater of the two are those who are asked. Now it is plain that human nature contains nothing worthy of God's imitation. Accordingly the tokens of respect which we evince to one another, confessing ourselves to be inferior to our neighbours, we have transferred to the humiliation of the Incomparable Nature. And thus He who bore our sicknesses and interceded for us, bent His knee in prayer, by reason of the man which He assumed, giving us an example, that we ought not to exalt ourselves at the time of prayer, but in all things be conformed to humility; *for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.* (James 4:6, 1 Pet. 5:5.)

Chrysostom. Now every art is set forth by the words and works of him who teacheth it. Because then our Lord had come to teach no ordinary virtue, therefore He speaks and does the same things. And so having in words commanded to pray, lest they enter into temptation, He does the same likewise in work, *saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me.* He saith not the words, *If thou wilt*, as if ignorant whether it was pleasing to the Father. For such knowledge was not more difficult than the knowledge of His Father's substance, which He alone clearly knew, according to John, *As the Father knoweth me, even so have I known the Father.* (John 10:15.) Nor says He this, as refusing His Passion. For He who rebuked a disciple, who wished to prevent His Passion, (Matt. 16:23.) so as even after many commendations, to call him Satan, how should He be unwilling to be crucified? Consider then why it was so said. How great a thing was it to hear that the unspeakable God, who passes all understanding, was content to enter the virgin's womb, to suck her milk, and to undergo every thing human. Since then that was almost incredible which was about to happen, He sent first indeed Prophets to announce it, afterwards He Himself comes clothed in the flesh, so that you could not suppose Him to be a phantom. He permits His flesh to endure all natural infirmities, to hunger, to thirst, to sleep, to labour, to be afflicted, to be tormented; on this account likewise He refuses not death, that He might manifest thereby His true humanity.

Ambrose. He says then, *If thou wilt, remove this cup from me*, as man refusing death, as God maintaining His own decree.

Bede. Or He begs the cup to be removed from Him, not indeed from fear of suffering, but from His compassion for the first people, lest they should have to drink the cup first drunk by Him. Therefore He says expressly, not, Remove from Me the cup, but *this cup*, that is, the cup of the Jewish people, who can have no excuse for their ignorance in slaying Me, having the Law and the Prophets daily prophesying of Me.

Dionysius of Alexandria. (Dion. de Martyr. c. 7.) Or when He says, *Let this cup pass from me*, it is not, let it not come to Me, for unless it had come it could not pass away. It was therefore when He perceived it already present that He began to be afflicted and sorrowful, and as it was close at hand, He says, *Let this cup pass;* for as that which has passed can neither be said not to have come nor yet to remain, so also the Saviour asks first that the temptation slightly assailing Him may pass away. And this is the not entering into temptation which He counsels to pray for. But the most perfect way of avoiding temptation is manifested, when he says, *Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.* For God is not a tempter to evil, but lie wishes to grant us good things above what we either desire or understand. Therefore He seeks that the perfect will of His Father which He Himself had known, should dispose of the event, which is the same will as His own, as respects the Divine nature. But He shrinks to fulfil the human will, which He calls His own, and which is inferior to His Father's will.

Athanasius. (de Incarn. et cont. Ar.) For here He manifests a double will. One indeed human, which is of the flesh, the other divine. For our human nature, because of the weakness of the flesh, refuses the Passion, but His divine will eagerly embraced it, for that it was not possible that He should be holden of death.

Gregory of Nyssa. (non occ.) Now Apollinaris asserts that Christ had not His own will according to His earthly nature, but that in Christ exists only the will of God who descends from heaven. Let him then say what will is it which God would have by no means to be fulfilled? And the Divine nature does not remove His own will.

Bede. When He drew near His Passion, the Saviour also took upon Him the words of weak man; as when something threatens us which we do not wish to come to pass, we then through weakness seek that it may not be, to the end that we also may be prepared by fortitude to find the will of our Creator contrary to our own will.

22:43–46

43. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

44. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow.

46. And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

Theophylact. To make known unto us the power of prayer that we may exercise it in adversity, our Lord when praying is comforted by an Angel. (Matt. 4:11.)

Bede. In another place we read that Angels came and ministered unto Him. In testimony then of each nature, Angels are said both to have ministered to Him and comforted Him. For the Creator needed not the protection of His creature, but being made man as for our sakes He is sad, so for our sakes He is comforted.

Theophylact. But some say that the Angel appeared, glorifying Him, saying, O Lord, Thine is the power, for Thou art able to vanquish death, and to deliver weak mankind.

Chrysostom. And because not in appearance but in reality He took upon Himself our flesh, in order to confirm the truth of the dispensation He submits to bear human suffering; for it follows, *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly.*

Ambrose. Many are shocked at this place who turn the sorrows of the Saviour to an argument of inherent weakness from the beginning, rather than taken upon Him for the time. But I am so far from considering it a thing to be excused, that I never more admire His mercy and majesty; for He would have conferred less upon me had He not taken upon Him my feelings. For He took upon Him my sorrow, that upon me He might bestow His joy. With confidence therefore I name His sadness, because I preach His cross. He must needs then have undergone affliction, that He might conquer. For they have no praise of fortitude whose wounds have produced stupor rather than pain. He wished therefore to instruct us how we should conquer death, and what is far greater, the anguish of coming death. Thou smartedst then, O Lord, not from thy own but my wounds; *for he was wounded for our transgressions*. And perhaps He is sad, because that after Adam's fall the passage by which we must depart from this world was such that death was necessary. Nor is it far from the truth that He was sad for His persecutors, who He knew would suffer punishment for their wicked sacrilege.

Gregory. (Mor. 24. c. 17.) He has expressed also the conflict of our mind in itself, as death approaches, for we suffer a certain thrill of terror and dread, when by the dissolution of the flesh we draw near to the eternal judgment; and with good reason, for the soul finds in a moment that which can never be changed.

Theophylact. Now that the preceding prayer was of His human nature, not His divine, as the Arians say, is argued from what is said of His sweat, which follows, *And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.*

Bede. Let no one ascribe this sweat to natural weakness, nay, it is contrary to nature to sweat blood, but rather let him derive therefrom a declaration to us, that He was now obtaining the accomplishment of His prayer, namely, that He might purge by His blood the faith of His disciples, still convicted of human frailty.

Augustine. (Prosp. ex Aug. Sent. 68.) Our Lord praying with a bloody sweat represented the martyrdoms which should flow from His whole body, which is the Church.

Theophylact. Or this is proverbially said of one who has sweated intensely, that He sweated blood; the Evangelist then wishing to shew that He was moistened with large drops of sweat, takes drops of blood for an example. But afterwards finding His disciples asleep for sorrow, He upbraids them, at the same time reminding them to pray; for it follows, *And when he rose from prayer and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping.*

Chrysostom. For it was midnight, and the disciples' eyes were heavy from grief, and their sleep was not that of drowsiness but sorrow.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 4.) Now Luke has not stated after which prayer He came to His disciples, still in nothing does he disagree with Matthew and Mark.

Bede. Our Lord proves by what comes after, that He prayed for His disciples whom He exhorts by watching and prayer to be partakers of His prayer; for it follows, *And he saith unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*

Theophylact. That is, that they should not be overcome by temptation, for not to be led into temptation is not to be overwhelmed by it. Or He simply bids us pray that our life may be quiet, and we be not cast into trouble of any kind. For it is of the devil and presumptuous, for a man to throw himself into temptation. Therefore James said not, "Cast yourselves into temptation," but, *When ye are fallen, count it all joy*, (Jam. 1:2.) making a voluntary act out of an involuntary.

47. And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

48. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49. When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50. And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53. When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness.

Gloss. (non occ.) After first mentioning the prayer of Christ, St. Luke goes on to speak of His betrayal wherein He is betrayed by His disciple, saying, *And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas.*

Cyril of Alexandria. He says, *he that was called Judas*, holding his name as it were in abhorrence; but adds, *one of the twelve*, to signify the enormity of the traitor. For he who had been honoured as an apostle became the cause of the murder of Christ.

Chrysostom. For just as incurable wounds yield neither to severe nor soothing remedies, so the soul when once it is taken captive, and has sold itself to any particular sin, will reap no benefit from admonition. And so it was with Judas, who desisted not from His betrayal, though deterred by Christ by every manner of warning. Hence it follows, *And drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Unmindful of the glory of Christ, he thought to be able to act secretly, daring to make an especial token of love the instrument of his treachery.

Chrysostom. (Conc. 1. de Laz.) Now we must not depart from admonishing our brethren, albeit nothing comes of our words. For even the streams though no one drink therefrom still flow on, and him whom thou hast not persuaded to-day, peradventure thou mayest to-morrow. For the fisherman after drawing empty nets the whole day, when it was now late takes a fish. And thus our Lord, though He knew that Judas was not to be converted, yet ceased not to do such things as had reference to him. It follows, *But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?*

Ambrose. It must be used I think by way of question, as if he arrests the traitor with a lover's affection.

Chrysostom. And He gives him his proper name, which was rather like one lamenting and recalling him, than one provoked to anger.

Ambrose. He says, *Betrayest thou with a kiss?* that is, dost thou inflict a wound with the pledge of love? with the instruments of peace dost thou impose death? a slave, dost thou betray thy Lord; a disciple, thy master; one chosen, Him who chose thee?

Chrysostom. But He said not, "Betrayest thou thy Master, thy Lord, thy Benefactor," but *the Son of man*, that is, the humble and meek, who though He were not thy Master and Lord, forasmuch as He has borne himself so gently toward thee, should have never been betrayed by thee.

Ambrose. O great manifestation of Divine power, great discipline of virtue! Both the design of thy traitor is detected, and yet forbearance is not withheld. He shews whom it is Judas betrays, by manifesting things hidden; He declares whom he delivers up, by saying, *the Son of man*, for the human flesh, not the Divine nature, is seized. That however which most confounds the ungrateful, is the thought that he had delivered up Him, who though He was the Son of God, yet for our sakes wished to be the Son of man; as if He said, "For thee did I undertake, O ungrateful man, that which thou betrayest in hypocrisy.

Augustine. The Lord when He was betrayed first said this which Luke mentions, *Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* next, what Matthew says, *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* and lastly, what John records, *Whom seek ye?*

Ambrose. Our Lord kissed him, not that He would teach us to dissemble, but both that He might not seem to shrink from the traitor, and that He might the more move him by not denying him the offices of love.

Theophylact. The disciples are inflamed with zeal, and unsheath their swords. But whence have they swords? Because they had slain the lamb, and had departed from the feast. Now the other disciples ask whether they should strike; but Peter, always fervent in defence of his Master, waits not for permission, but straightway strikes the servant of the High Priest; as it follows, *And one of them smote, &c.*

Augustine. He who struck, according to John, was Peter, but he whom he struck was called Malchus.

Ambrose. For Peter being well versed in the law, and full of ardent affection, knowing that it was counted righteousness in Phineas that he had killed the sacrilegious persons, struck the High Priest's servant.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 5.) Now Luke says, *But Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far*; which is what Matthew records, *Put thy sword up into its sheath.* Nor will it move you as contrary thereto, that Luke says here that our Lord answered, *Suffer ye thus far*, as if He had so spoken after the blow to shew that what was done had pleased Him so far, but He did not wish it to proceed farther, seeing that in these words which Matthew has given, it may rather be implied that the whole circumstance in which Peter used the sword was displeasing to our Lord. For the truth is, that upon their asking, *Lord, shall we strike with the sword?* He then answered, *Suffer ye thus far*, that is, be not troubled with what is about to happen. They must be permitted to advance so far, that is, to take Me, and so to fulfil the things which were written of Me. For he would not say, *And Jesus answering*, unless He answered this question, not Peter's deed. But between the delay of their words of question to our Lord and His answer, Peter in the eagerness of defence struck the blow. And two things cannot be said, though one may be said and another may be done, at the same time. Then, as Luke says, He healed him who was struck, as it follows, *And he touched his ear, and healed him.*

Bede. For the Lord is never forgetful of His lovingkindness. While they are bringing death upon the righteous, He heals the wounds of His persecutors.

Ambrose. The Lord in wiping away the bloody wounds, conveyed thereby a divine mystery, namely, that the servant of the prince of this world, not by the condition of His nature but by guilt, should receive a wound on the ear, for that he had not heard the words of wisdom. Or, by Peter so willingly striking the ear, he taught that he ought not to have a ear outwardly, who had not one in a mystery. But why did Peter do this? Because he especially obtained the power of binding and loosing; therefore by his spiritual sword he takes away the interior ear of him who understandeth not. But the Lord Himself restores the hearing, shewing that even they, if they would turn, might be saved, who inflicted the wounds in our Lord's Passion; for that all sin may be washed away in the mysteries of faith.

Bede. Or that servant is the Jewish people sold by the High Priests to an unlawful obligation, who, by the Passion of our Lord, lost their right ear; that is, the spiritual understanding of the law. And this ear indeed is cut off by Peter's sword, not that he takes away the sense of understanding from those that hear, but manifests it withdrawn by the judgment of God from the careless. But the same right ear in those who among the same people have believed, is restored by the Divine condescension to its former office.

It follows, *Then said Jesus unto them, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and slaves? &c.*

Chrysostom. For they had come at night fearing an outbreak of the multitude, therefore He says, "What need was there of these arms against one who was always with you?" as it follows, *When I was daily with you.*

Cyril of Alexandria. Whereby He does not blame the chiefs of the Jews that they had not sooner prepared their murderous designs against Him, but convicts them of having presumptuously supposed they had attacked Him against His will; as if He says, "Ye did not take Me then, because I willed it not, but neither could ye now, did I not of My own accord surrender Myself into your hands." Hence it follows, *But this is your hour*, that is, a short time is permitted you to exercise your vengeance against Me, but the Father's will agrees with Mine. He also says, that this power is given to darkness, i. e. the Devil and the Jews, of rising in rebellion against Christ. And then is added, *And the power of darkness.*

Bede. As if He says, Therefore are ye assembled against Me in darkness, because your power, wherewith ye are thus armed against the light of the world, is in darkness. But it is asked, how Jesus is said to be addressing the chief priests, the officers of the temple, and the elders, who came to Him, whereas they are reported not to have gone of themselves, but to have sent their servants while they waited in the hall of Caiaphas? The answer then to this contradiction is, that they came not by themselves, but by those whom they sent to take Christ in the power of their command.

22:54–62

54. Then took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. And Peter followed affar off.

55. And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, Peter sat down among them.

56. But a certain maid beheld him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57. And he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58. And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59. And about, the space of one hour after another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilæan.

60. And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

61. And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Ambrose. The wretched men understood not the mystery, nor had reverence unto an outpouring of compassion so merciful, that even His enemies He suffered not to be wounded. For it is said, *Then look they him, &c.* When we read of Jesus being holden, let us guard against thinking that He is holden with respect to His divine nature, and unwilling through weakness, for He is held captive and bound according to the truth of His bodily nature.

Bede. Now the Chief Priest means Caiaphas, who according to John was High Priest that year.

Augustine. But first He was led to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, as John says, then to Caiaphas, as Matthew says, but Mark and Luke do not give the name of the High Priest.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 83. in Matt.) It is therefore said, *to the house of the High Priest*, that nothing whatever might be done without the consent of the chief of the Priests. For thither had they all assembled waiting for Christ. Now the great zeal of Peter is manifested in his not flying when he saw all the others doing so; for it follows, *But Peter followed afar off.*

Ambrose. Rightly he followed afar off, soon about to deny, for he could never have denied if he had clung close to Christ. But herein must he be revered, that he forsook not our Lord, even though he was afraid. Fear is the effect of nature, solicitude of tender affection.

Bede. But that when our Lord was going to His Passion, Peter followed afar off represents the Church about to follow indeed, that is, to imitate our Lord's Passion, but in a far different manner, for the Church suffers for herself, our Lord suffered for the Church.

Ambrose. And by this time there was a fire burning in the house of the High Priest; as it follows, *And when they had kindled a fire, &c.* Peter came to warm himself, because his Lord being taken prisoner, the heart of his soul had been chilled in him.

Pseudo-Augustine. (App. Serm. 79.) For to Peter were delivered the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to him were entrusted an innumerable multitude of people, who were wrapped up in sin. But Peter was somewhat too vehement, as the cutting off the car of the High Priest's servant betokens. If he then

who was so stern and so severe had obtained the gift of not sinning, what pardon would he have given to the people committed to him? Therefore Divine Providence suffers him first to be holden of sin, that by the consciousness of his own fall he might soften his too harsh judgment towards sinners. When he wished to warm himself at the fire, a maid came to him, of whom it follows, *But a certain maid beheld him, &c.*

Ambrose. What meaneth it, that a maid is the first to betray Peter, whereas surely men ought the more easily to have recognised him, save that that sex should be plainly implicated in our Lord's murder, in order that it might also be redeemed by His Passion? But Peter when discovered denies, for better that Peter should have denied, than our Lord's word should have failed. Hence it follows, *And he denied, saying, Woman, I know him not.*

Augustine. (ut sup.) What ails thee, Peter, thy voice is suddenly changed? That mouth full of faith and love, is turned to hatred and unbelief. Not yet awhile is the scourge applied, not yet the instruments of torture. Thy interrogator is no one of authority, who might cause alarm to the confessor. The mere voice of a woman asks the question, and she perhaps not about to divulge thy confession, nor yet a woman, but a door-keeper, a mean slave.

Ambrose. Peter denied, because he promised rashly. He does not deny on the mount, nor in the temple, nor in his own house, but in the judgment-hall of the Jews. There he denies where Jesus was bound, where truth is not. And denying Him he says, *I know him not.* It were presumptuous to say that he knew Him whom the human mind can not grasp. For *no one knoweth the Son but the Father.* (Matt. 11:17). Again, a second time he denies Christ; for it follows, *And after a little while another saw him, and said, Thou wert also one of them.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 6.) And it is supposed that in the second denial he was addressed by two persons, namely, by the maid whom Matthew and Mark mention, and by another whom Luke speaks of. With respect then to what Luke here relates, *And after a little while, &c.* Peter had already gone out of the gate, and the cock had crowed the first time, as Mark says; and now he had returned, that, as John says, he might again deny standing by the fire. Of which denial it follows, *And Peter said, Man, I am not.*

Ambrose. For he preferred to deny himself rather than Christ, or because he seemed to deny being of the company of Christ, he truly denied himself.

Bede. In this denial then of Peter we affirm that not only is Christ denied by him who says that He is not Christ, but by him also, who, being a Christian, says he is not.

Ambrose. He is also asked a third time; for it follows, *And about the space of one hour after, another confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. ut sup.) What Matthew and Mark call *after a little while*, Luke explains by saying, *about the space of one hour after*; but with regard to the space of time, John says nothing. Likewise when Matthew and Mark record not in the singular but in the plural number those who conversed with Peter, while Luke and John speak of one, we may easily suppose either that Matthew and Mark used the plural for the singular by a common form of speech, or that one person in particular addressed Peter, as being the one who had seen him, and that others trusting to his credit joined in pressing him. But now as to the words which Matthew asserts were said to Peter himself, *Truly thou art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee*; as also those which to the same Peter John declared to have been said, *Did not I see thee in the garden?* whereas Mark and Luke state that they spoke to one another concerning Peter; we either believe that they held the right opinion who say that they were really addressed to Peter; (for what was said concerning him in his presence amounts to the same as if it had been said to him;) or that they were said in both ways, and that some of the Evangelists related them one way, some the other.

Bede. But he adds, *For he is a Galilæan*; not that the Galilæans spoke a different language from the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who indeed were Hebrews, but that each separate province and country having its own peculiarities could not avoid a vernacular tone of speech. It follows, *And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest.*

Ambrose. That is, I know not your blasphemies. But we make excuse for him. He did not excuse himself. For an involved answer is not sufficient for our confessing Jesus, but an open confession is required. And therefore Peter is not represented to have answered this deliberately, for he afterwards recollected himself, and wept.

Bede. Holy Scripture is often wont to mark the character of certain events by the nature of the times in which they take place. Hence Peter who sinned at midnight repented at cock-crow; for it follows, *And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.* The error he committed in the darkness of forgetfulness, he corrected by the remembrance of the true light.

Augustine. (ut sup.) The cock-crow we understand to have been after the third denial of Peter, as Mark has expressed it.

Bede. This cock must, I think, be understood mystically as some great Teacher, who rouses the listless and sleepy, saying, *Awake, ye righteous, and sin not.*

Chrysostom. (Hom. 83. in Joan.) Marvel now at the case of the Master, who though He was a prisoner, had exercised much forethought for His disciple, whom by a look He brought to Himself, and provoked to tears; for it follows, *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter.*

Augustine. (ut sup.) How we should understand this, requires some careful consideration; for Matthew says, *Peter was sitting without in the hall*, which he would not have said unless the transaction relating to our Lord were passing within. Likewise also, where Mark said, *And as Peter was beneath in the hall*, he shews that the things he had been speaking of took place not only within but in the upper part. How then did our Lord look upon Peter? not with His bodily face, since Peter was without in the hall among those who were warming themselves, while these things were going on in the inner part of the house. Wherefore, that looking upon Peter seems to me to have been done in a divine manner. And as it was said, *Look thou, and hear me*, (Ps. 13:3.) and, *Turn and deliver my soul*, (Ps. 6:4.) so I think the expression here used, *The Lord turned and looked upon Peter.*

Bede. For to look upon him is to have compassion, seeing that not only while penance is being practised, but that it may be practised, the mercy of God is necessary.

Ambrose. Lastly, those whom Jesus looks upon weep for their sins. Hence it follows, *And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.* Why did he weep? Because he sinned as man. I read of his tears, I do not read of his confession. Tears wash away an offence which it is shame to confess in words. The first and second time he denied and wept not, for as yet our Lord had not looked upon him. He denied the third time, Jesus looked upon him, and he wept bitterly. So then if thou wilt obtain pardon, wash away thy guilt in tears.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now Peter did not dare to weep openly, lest he should be detected by his tears, but he went out and wept. He wept not because of punishment, but because he denied his beloved Lord, which was more galling than any punishment.

22:63–71

63. And the men that held Jesus mocked him, and smote him.

64. And when they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophesy, who is it that smote thee?

65. And many other things blasphemously spake they against him.

66. And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying,

67. Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe:

68. And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.

69. Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.

70. Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

71. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 7.) The temptation of Peter which took place between the mockings of our Lord is not related by all the Evangelists in the same order. For Matthew and Mark first mention those, then Peter's temptation; but Luke has first described the temptations of Peter, then the mockings of our Lord, saying, *And the men that held Jesus mocked him, &c.*

Chrysostom. Jesus, the Lord of heaven and earth, sustains and suffers the mockings of the ungodly, giving us an example of patience.

Theophylact. Likewise the Lord of prophets is derided as a false prophet. It follows, *And they blindfolded him.* This they did as a dishonour to Him who wished to be accounted by the people as a prophet. But He who was struck with the blows of the Jews, is struck also now by the blasphemies of false Christians. And they blindfolded Him, not that He should not see their wickedness, but that they might hide His face from them. But heretics, and Jews, and wicked Catholics, provoke Him with their vile actions, as it were mocking Him, saying, *Who smote thee?* while they flatter themselves that their evil thoughts and works of darkness are not known by Him.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. ut sup.) Now our Lord is supposed to have suffered these things until morning in the house of the High Priest, to which He was first led. Hence it follows, *And as soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led him into their council, saying, Art thou the Christ? &c.*

Bede. They wished not for truth, but were contriving calumny. Because they expected that Christ would come only as man, of the root of David, they sought this of Him, that if He should say, "I am the Christ," they might falsely accuse Him of claiming to Himself the kingly power.

Theophylact. He knew the secrets of their hearts, that they who had not believed His works would much less believe His words. Hence it follows, *And he said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe, &c.*

Bede. For He had often declared Himself to be the Christ; as when he said, *I and my Father are one*, (John 10:30.) and other such like things. *And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me.* For He had asked them how they said Christ was the Son of David, whereas David in the Spirit called Him his Lord. But they wished neither to believe His words nor to answer His questions. However, because they sought to accuse falsely the seed of David, they hear something still farther; as it follows, *Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God.*

Theophylact. As if he said, There is no time left to you any longer for discourses and teaching, but hereafter shall be the time of judgment, when ye shall see Me, the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of the power of God.

Cyril of Alexandria. Whenever sitting and a throne are spoken of God, His kingly and supreme majesty is signified. For we do not imagine any judgment-seat to be placed, on which we believe the Lord of all takes His seat; nor again, that in any wise right hand or left hand appertain to the Divine nature; for figure, and place, and sitting, are the properties of bodies. But how shall the Son be seen to be of equal honour and to sit together on the same throne, if He is not the Son according to nature, having in Himself the natural property of the Father?

Theophylact. When then they heard this, they ought to have been afraid, but after these words they are the more frantic; as it follows, *All said, &c.*

Bede. They understood that He called Himself the Son of God in these words, *The Son of man shall sit on the right hand of the power of God.*

Ambrose. The Lord had rather prove Himself a King than call Himself one, that they might have no excuse for condemning Him, when they confess the truth of that which they lay against Him. It follows, *And he said, Ye say that I am.*

Cyril of Alexandria. When Christ spoke this, the company of the Pharisees were very wroth, uttering shameful words; as it follows, *Then said they, What need we any further witness? &c.*

Theophylact. Whereby it is manifest, that the disobedient reap no advantage, when the more secret mysteries are revealed to them, but rather incur the heavier punishment. Wherefore such things ought to be concealed from them.

CHAP. 23

23:1–5

1. And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

2. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a King.

3. And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.

4. Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.

5. And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 7.) Luke, after he had finished relating the denial of Peter, recapitulated all that took place concerning our Lord during the morning, mentioning some particulars which the others omitted; and so he has composed his narrative, giving a similar account with the rest, when he says, *And the whole multitude of them arose, and led him to Pilate, &c.*

Bede. That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which He prophesied of His own death, *He shall be delivered to the Gentiles*, that is, to the Romans. For Pilate was a Roman, and the Romans had sent him as governor to Judæa.

Augustine. (lib. iii. c. 8.) He next relates what happens before Pilate, as follows, *And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting our nation, &c.* Matthew and Mark do not give this, though affirming that they accused Him, but Luke has laid open the very charges which they falsely brought against Him.

Theophylact. Most plainly are they opposed to the truth. For our Lord was so far from forbidding to give tribute, that He commanded it to be given. How then did He pervert the people? Was it that He might take possession of the kingdom? But this is incredible to all, for when the whole multitude wished to choose Him for their king, He was aware of it, and fled.

Bede. Now two charges having been brought against our Lord, namely, that He forbade to pay tribute to Cæsar, and called Himself Christ the King, it may be that Pilate had chanced to hear that which our Lord spake, *Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's*; and therefore setting aside this accusation as a palpable lie of the Jews, he thought fit to ask concerning that alone of which he knew nothing, the saying about *the kingdom*; for it follows, *Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews, &c.*

Theophylact. It seems to me that he asked this question of Christ by way of deriding the wantonness or hypocrisy of the alleged charge. As if he said, Thou a poor humble naked man, with none to help Thee, art accused of seeking a kingdom, for which Thou wouldest need many to help Thee, and much money.

Bede. He answers the governor in the same words which He used to the Chief Priests, that Pilate might be condemned by his own voice; for it follows, *And he answering said, Thou sayest.*

Theophylact. Now they finding nothing else to support their calumny, have resort to the aid of clamour, for it follows, *And they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place.* As if they said, He perverts the people, not in one part only, but beginning from Galilee He arrives at this place, having passed through Judæa. I think then that they purposely made mention of Galilee, as desirous to alarm Pilate, for the Galilæans were of a different sect and given to sedition, as, for example, Judas of Galilee who is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles.

Bede. But with these words they accuse not Him, but themselves. For to have taught the people, and by teaching to have roused them from their former idleness, and doing this to have passed through the whole land of promise, was an evidence not of sin, but of virtue.

Ambrose. Our Lord is accused and is silent, for He needs no defence. Let them cast about for defence who fear to be conquered. He does not then confirm, the accusation by His silence, but He despises it by not refuting it. Why then should He fear who does not court safety? The Safety of all men forfeits His own, that He may gain that of all.

23:6–12

6. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilæan.

7. And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

8. And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

9. Then he questioned with him in many words; but he answered him nothing.

10. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him.

11. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12. And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Bede. Pilate having determined not to question our Lord concerning the above-mentioned accusation, is the rather glad now that an opportunity offers

to escape from passing judgment upon Him. Hence it is said, *When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were a Galilæan.* And lest he should be compelled to pass sentence against one whom he knew to be innocent, and delivered for envy, sends Him to be heard by Herod, preferring that he who was the Tetrarch of our Lord's country might be the person either to acquit or punish Him; for it follows, *And as soon as he knew that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction.*

Theophylact. Wherein he follows the Roman law, which provided that every man should be judged by the governor of his own jurisdiction.

Gregory. (Mor. 10. c. 31.) Now Herod wished to make proof of Christ's fame, desiring to witness His miracles; for it follows, *And when Herod saw Jesus, he was glad, &c.*

Theophylact. Not as though he was about to gain any benefit from the sight, but seized with curiosity he thought he should see that extraordinary man, of whose wisdom and wonderful works he had heard so much. He also wished to hear from His mouth what He could say. Accordingly he asks Him questions, making a sport of Him, and ridiculing Him. But Jesus, who performed all things prudently, and who, as David testifies, *ordereth His words with discretion*, (Ps. 112:5.) thought it right in such a case to be silent. For a word uttered to one whom it profiteth nothing becomes the cause of his condemnation. Therefore it follows, *But he answered him nothing.*

Ambrose. He was silent and did nothing, for Herod's unbelief deserved not to see Him, and the Lord shunned display. And perhaps typically in Herod are represented all the ungodly, who if they have not believed the Law and the Prophets, cannot see Christ's wonderful works in the Gospel.

Gregory. (Mor. 22. c. 16.) From these words we ought to derive a lesson, that whenever our hearers wish as if by praising us to gain knowledge from us, but not to change their own wicked course, we must be altogether silent, lest if from love of ostentation we speak God's word, both they who were guilty cease not to be so, and we who were not become so. And there are many things which betray the motive of a hearer, but one in particular, when they always praise what they hear, yet never follow what they praise.

Gregory. (Mor. 10. c. 31.) The Redeemer therefore though questioned held His peace, though expected disdained to work miracles. And keeping Himself secretly within Himself, left those who were satisfied to seek for outward things, to remain thankless without, preferring to be openly set at nought by the proud, than be praised by the hollow voices of unbelievers. Hence it follows, *And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused him. And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a white robe.*

Ambrose. It is not without reason that He is arrayed by Herod in a white robe, as bearing a sign of His immaculate Passion, that the Lamb of God without spot would take upon Himself the sins of the world.

Theophylact. Nevertheless, observe how the Devil is thwarted by the thing which He does. He heaps up scorn and reproaches against Christ, whereby it is made manifest that the Lord is not seditious. Otherwise He would not have been derided, when so great a danger was afloat, and that too from a people who were held in suspicion, and so given to change. But the sending of Christ by Pilate to Herod, becomes the commencement of a mutual friendship, Pilate not receiving those who were subject to Herod's authority, as it is added, *And they were made friends, &c.* Observe the Devil every where uniting together things separate, that he may compass the death of Christ. Let us blush then, if for the sake of our salvation we keep not even our friends in union with us.

Ambrose. Under the type also of Herod and Pilate, who from enemies were made friends by Jesus Christ, is preserved the figure of the people of Israel and the Gentile nation; that through our Lord's Passion should come to pass the future concord of both, yet so that the people of the Gentiles should receive the word of God first, and then transmit it by the devotion of their faith to the Jewish people; that they too may with the glory of their majesty clothe the body of Christ, which before they had despised.

Bede. Or this alliance between Herod and Pilate signifies that the Gentiles and Jews, though differing in race, religion, and character, agree together in persecuting Christians.

23:13–25

13. And Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests and the rulers and the people,

14. Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him:

15. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

16. I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

17. (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18. And they cried out all at once, saying, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

19. (Who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

20. Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21. But they cried, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.

22. And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.

23. And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified. And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

24. And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.

25. And he released unto them him that for sedition and murder was east into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Augustine. Luke returns to those things which were going on before the governor, from which He had digressed in order to relate what took place with Herod; saying as follows, *And Pilate, when he had called, &c.* from which we infer, that he has omitted the part wherein Pilate questioned our Lord what He had to answer to His accusers.

Ambrose. Here Pilate, who as a judge acquits Christ, is made the minister of His crucifixion. He is sent to Herod, sent back to Pilate, as it follows, *Nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him, and behold nothing worthy of death is done unto him.* They both refuse to pronounce Him guilty, yet for fear's sake, Pilate gratifies the cruel desires of the Jews.

Theophylact. Wherefore by the testimony of two men, Jesus is declared innocent, but the Jews His accusers brought forward no witness whom they could believe. See then how truth triumphs. Jesus is silent, and His enemies witness for Him; the Jews make loud cries, and not one of them corroborates their clamour.

Bede. Perish then those writings, which, composed so long a time after Christ, convict not the accused of magical arts against Pilate, but the writers themselves of treachery and lying against Christ.

Theophylact. Pilate therefore lenient and easy, yet wanting in firmness for the truth, because afraid of being accused, adds, *I will therefore chastise him and release him.*

Bede. As if he said, I will subject Him to all the scourgings and mockings you desire, but do not thirst after the innocent blood. It follows, *For of necessity he must release one unto them, &c.* an obligation not imposed by a decree of the imperial law, but binding by the annual custom of the nation, whom in such things he was glad to please.

Theophylact. For the Romans permitted the Jews to live according to their own laws and customs. And it was a natural custom of the Jews to seek pardon of the prince for those who were condemned, as they asked Jonathan of Saul. And hence it is now added, with respect to their petition, *And they cried all at once, Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas, &c.* (1 Sam. 14:45.)

Ambrose. Not unreasonably do they seek the pardon of a murderer, who were themselves demanding the death of the innocent. Such are the laws of iniquity, that what innocence hates, guilt loves. And here the interpretation of the name affords a figurative resemblance, for Barabbas is in Latin, the son of a father. Those then to whom it is said, *Ye are of your father the Devil*, are represented as about to prefer to the true Son of God the son of their father, that is, Antichrist.

Bede. Even to this day their request still clings to the Jews. For since when they had the choice given to them, they chose a robber for Jesus, a murderer for a Saviour; rightly lost they both life and salvation, and became subject to such robberies and seditions among themselves as to forfeit both their country and kingdom.

Theophylact. Thus it came to pass, the once holy nation rages to slay, the Gentile Pilate forbids slaughter; as it follows, *Pilate therefore spoke again unto them, but they cried out, Crucify, &c.*

Bede. With the worst kind of death, that is, crucifixion, they long to murder the innocent. For they who hung on the cross, with their hands and feet fixed by nails to the wood, suffered a prolonged death, that their agony might not quickly cease; but the death of the cross was chosen by our Lord, as that which having overcome the Devil, He was about to place as a trophy on the brows of the faithful.

Theophylact. Three times did Pilate acquit Christ, for it follows, *And he said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I will chastise him, and let him go.*

Bede. This chastisement wherewith Pilate sought to satisfy the people, lest their rage should go even so far as to crucify Jesus, John's words bear testimony that he not only threatened but performed together with mockings and scourgings. But when they saw all their charges which they brought against the Lord baffled by Pilate's diligent questioning, they resort at last to prayers only; entreating that He might be crucified.

Theophylact. They cry out the third time against Christ, that by this third voice, they may approve the murder to be their own, which by their entreaties they extorted; for it follows, *And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required. And he released him that for sedition and murder was cast into prison, but delivered Jesus to their will.*

Chrysostom. For they thought they could add this, namely, that Jesus was worse than a robber, and so wicked, that neither for mercy's sake, or by the privilege of the feast, ought He to be let free.

23:26–32

26. And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

27. And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

32. And there were also two other, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

Gloss. (non occ.) Having related the condemnation of Christ, Luke naturally goes on to speak of His crucifixion; as it is said, *And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, &c.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 10.) But John relates that Jesus bore His own cross, from which is understood that He was Himself carrying His cross, when He went forth to that place which is called Calvary; but as they journeyed Simon was forced into the service on the road, and the cross was given him to carry as far as that place.

Theophylact. For no one else accepted to bear the cross, because the wood was counted an abomination. Accordingly upon Simon the Cyrenian they imposed as it were to his dishonour the bearing of the cross, which others refused. Here is fulfilled that prophecy of Isaiah, *Whose government shall be upon his shoulder.* (Isa. 9:6.) For the *government* of Christ is His cross; for which the Apostle says, *God hath exalted him.* (Phil. 2:9.) And as for a mark of dignity, some wear a belt, others a head dress, so our Lord the cross. And if thou seekest, thou wilt find that Christ does not reign in us save by hardships, whence it comes that the luxurious are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

Ambrose. Christ therefore bearing His cross, already as a conqueror carried His trophies. The cross is laid upon His shoulders, because, whether Simon or Himself bore it, both Christ bore it in the man, and the man in Christ. Nor do the accounts of the Evangelists differ, since the mystery reconciles them. And it is the rightful order of our advance that Christ should first Himself erect the trophy of His cross, then hand it down to be raised by His martyrs. He is not a Jew who bears the cross, but an alien and a foreigner, nor does he precede but follow, according as it is written, *Let him lake up his cross, and follow me.* (Matt. 16:24, Luke 9:23.)

Bede. Simon is by interpretation "obedient," Cyrene "an heir." By this man therefore the people of the Gentiles are denoted, who formerly foreigners and aliens to the covenant, have now by obedience been made heirs of God. But Simon coming out of a village, bears the cross after Jesus, because forsaking the pagan rites, he obediently embraces the footsteps of our Lord's Passion. For a village is in Greek called πάγος, from whence Pagans derive their name.

Theophylact. Or he takes up the cross of Christ, who comes from the village; that is, he leaves this world and its labours, going forward to Jerusalem, that is, heavenly liberty. Hereby also we receive no slight instruction. For to be a master after the example of Christ, a man must himself first take up his cross, and in the fear of God crucify his own flesh, that he may so lay it upon those that are subject and obedient to him.

But there followed Christ a great company of people, and of women.

Bede. A large multitude indeed followed the cross of Christ, but with very different feelings. For the people who had demanded His death were rejoicing that they should see Him dying, the women weeping that He was about to die. But He was followed by the weeping only of women, not because that vast crowd of men was not also sorrowful at His Passion, but because the less esteemed female sex could more freely give utterance to what they thought.

Cyril of Alexandria. Women also are ever prone to tears, and have hearts easily disposed to pity.

Theophylact. He bids those who weep for Him cast their eyes forward to the evils that were coming, and weep for themselves.

Cyril of Alexandria. Signifying that in the time to come women would be bereft of their children. For when war breaks out upon the land of the Jews, all shall perish, both small and great. Hence it follows, *For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, &c.*

Theophylact. Seeing indeed that women shall cruelly roast their children, and the belly which had produced shall miserably again receive that which it bore.

Bede. By these days He signifies the time of the siege and captivity which was coming upon them from the Romans, of which He had said before, *Woe to them that are with child, and give suck in those days.* It is natural, when captivity by an enemy is threatening, to seek for refuge in fastnesses or hidden places, where men may lie concealed. And so it follows, *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.* For Josephus relates, that when the Romans pressed hard upon them, the Jews sought hastily the caverns of the mountains, and the lurking places in the hills. It may be also that the words, *Blessed are the barren*, are to be understood of those of both sexes, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake, and that it is said to the mountains and hills, *Fall upon us*, and *Cover us*, because all who are mindful of their own weakness, when the crisis of their temptations breaks upon them, have sought to be protected by the example, precepts, and prayers, of certain high and saintly men.

It follows, *But if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?*

Gregory. (Mor. 12. c. 4) He has called Himself the green wood and us the dry, for He has in Himself the life and strength of the Divine nature; but we who are mere men are called the dry wood.

Theophylact. As though He said to the Jews, If then the Romans have so raged against Me, a fruit-bearing and ever flourishing tree, what will they not attempt against you the people, who are a dry tree, destitute of every lifegiving virtue, and bearing no fruit?

Bede. Or as if He spake to all: If I who have done no sin being called the tree of life, do not depart from the world without suffering the fire of my Passion, what torment think ye awaits those who are barren of all fruits?

Theophylact. But the Devil, desiring to engender an evil opinion of our Lord, caused robbers also to be crucified with Him; whence it follows, *And there were two other malefactors led with him to be put to death.*

23:33

33. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Athanasius. (Hom. in Pass. Dom.) When mankind became corrupted, then Christ manifested His own body, that where corruption has been seen, there might spring up incorruption. Wherefore He is crucified in the place of Calvary; which place the Jewish doctors say was the burial-place of Adam.

Bede. Or else, without the gate were the places where the heads of condemned criminals were cut off, and they received the name of Calvary, that is, beheaded. Thus for the salvation of all men the innocent is crucified among the guilty, that where sin abounded, there grace might much more abound.

Cyril of Alexandria. The only-begotten Son of God did not Himself in His own nature in which He is God suffer the things which belong to the body, but rather in His earthly nature. For of one and the same Son both may be affirmed, namely, that He doth not suffer in His divine nature, and that He suffered in His human.

Eusebius. But if, on the contrary, after His intercourse with men, He suddenly disappeared, flying away to avoid death, He might be likened by man to a phantom. And just as if any one wished to exhibit some incombustible vessel, which triumphed over the nature of fire, he would put it into the flame, and then directly draw it out from the flame unharmed; so the Word of God, wishing to shew that the instrument which He used for the salvation of men was superior to death, exposed His mortal body to death to manifest His nature, then after a little rescued it from death by the force of His divine power. This is indeed the first cause of Christ's death. But the second is the manifestation of the divine power of Christ inhabiting a body. For seeing that men of old deified those who were destined to a like end with themselves, and whom they called Heroes and Gods, He taught that He alone of the dead must be acknowledged the true God, who having vanquished death is adorned with the rewards of victory, having trodden death under His feet. The third reason is, that a victim must be slain for the whole race of mankind, which being offered, the whole power of the evil spirits was destroyed, and every error put to silence. There is also another cause of the healthgiving death, that the disciples with secret faith might behold the resurrection after death. Whereunto they were taught to lift up their own hopes, that despising death they might embark cheerfully in the conflict with error.

Athanasius. (de Inc. Verb. Dei.) Now our Saviour came to accomplish not His own death, but that of man, for He experienced not death who is Life. Therefore not by His own death did He put off the body, but He endured that which was inflicted by men. But although His body had been afflicted, and was loosed in the sight of all men, yet was it not fitting that He who should heal the sicknesses of others should have His own body visited with sickness. But yet if without any disease He had put off His body apart in some remote place, He would not be believed when speaking of His resurrection. For death must precede resurrection; why then should He openly proclaim His resurrection, but die in secret? Surely if these things had happened secretly, what calumnies would unbelieving men have invented? How would the victory of Christ over death appear, unless undergoing it in the sight of all men He had proved it to be swallowed up by the incorruption of His body? But you will say, At least He ought to have devised for Himself a glorious death, to have avoided the death of the cross. But if He had done this, He would have made Himself suspected of not having power over every kind of death. As then the champion by laying prostrate whomsoever the enemy has opposed to him is shewn to be superior to all, so the Life of all men took upon Him that death which His enemies inflicted, because it was the most dreadful and shameful, the abominable death upon the cross, that having destroyed it, the dominion of death might be entirely overthrown. Wherefore His head is not cut off as John's was; He was not sawn asunder as Isaiah, that He might preserve His body entire, and indivisible to death, and not become an excuse to those who would divide the Church. For He wished to bear the curse of sin which we had incurred, by taking upon Him the accursed death of the cross, as it is said, *Cursed is he that hangeth upon a tree*. He dies also on the cross with outstretched hands, that with one indeed He may draw to Him the ancient people, with the other the Gentiles, joining both to Himself. Dying also on the cross He purges the air of evil spirits, and prepares for us an ascent into heaven.

Theophylact. Because also by a tree death bad entered, it must needs be that by a tree it should be abolished, and that the Lord passing unconquered through the pains of a tree should subdue the pleasures which flow from a tree.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. 1. de Res. Christ.) But the figure of the cross from one centre of contact branching out into four separate terminations, signifies the power and providence of Him who hung upon it extending every where.

Augustine. (de Gr. Nov. Test. Ep. 140.) For not without reason did He choose this kind of death, in order that He might be the master of breadth and length, and heighth and depth. For breadth lies in that cross piece of wood which is fastened from above. This belongs to good works, because on it the hands are outstretched. Length lies in that which is seen reaching from the former piece to the ground, for there in a certain manner we stand, that is, abide firm or persevere. And this is applied to longsuffering. Heighth is in that piece of wood which is left reaching upwards from that which is fixed across, that is, to the head of the Crucified; for the expectation of those who hope for better things is upward. Again, that part of the wood which is fixed hidden in the ground, signifies the depth of unrestrained grace.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 87. in Matt.) Two thieves also they crucified on the two sides, that He might be a partaker of their reproach; as it follows, *And the thieves one on his right hand, the other on his left*. But it did not so turn out. For of them nothing is said, but His cross is every where honoured. Kings, laying aside their crowns, assume the cross on their purple, on their diadems, on their arms. On the consecrated table, throughout the whole earth, the cross glitters. Such things are not of men. For even in their lifetime those who have acted nobly are mocked by their own actions, and when they perish their actions perish also. But in Christ it is quite different. For before the cross all things were gloomy, after it all things are joyful and glorious, that you may know that not a mere man was crucified.

Bede. But the two robbers crucified with Christ signify those who under the faith of Christ undergo either the pains of martyrdom, or the rules of a still stricter continence. But they do this for eternal glory, who imitate the actions of the thief on the right hand; while they who do it to gain the praise of men, imitate the thief on the left hand.

23:34–37

34. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

35. And the people stood beholding. And the rulers also with them derided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God.

36. And the soldiers also mocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

37. And saying, If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself.

Chrysostom. Because the Lord had said, *Pray for them that persecute you*, (Matt. 5:44.) this likewise He did, when He ascended the cross, as it follows, *Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them*, not that He was not able Himself to pardon them, but that He might teach us to pray for our persecutors, not only in word, but in deed also. But He says, *Forgive them*, if they should repent. For He is gracious to the penitent, if they are willing after so great wickedness to wash away their guilt by faith.

Bede. Nor must we imagine here that He prayed in vain, but that in those who believed after His passion He obtained the fruit of His prayers? It must be

remarked, however, that He prayed not for those who chose rather to crucify, rather than to confess Him whom they knew to be the Son of God, but for such as were ignorant what they did, having a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge, as He adds, *For they know not what they do.*

Greek Expositor. But for those who after the crucifixion remain in unbelief, no one can suppose that they are excused by ignorance, because of the notable miracles that with a loud voice proclaimed Him to be the Son of God.

Ambrose. It is important then to consider, in what condition He ascends the cross; for I see Him naked. Let him then who prepares to overcome the world, so ascend that he seek not the appliances of the world. Now Adam was overcome who sought for a covering. He overcame who laid aside His covering. He ascends such as nature formed us, God being our Creator. Such as the first man had dwelt in paradise, such did the second man enter paradise. But about to ascend the cross rightly, did He lay aside His royal garments, that you may know that He suffered not as God, but as man, though Christ is both.

Athanasius. (Hom. in Pass. Dom.) He also who for our sakes took upon Him all our conditions, put on our garments, the signs of Adam's death, that He might put them off, and in their stead clothe us with life and incorruption.

It follows, *And they parted his raiment among them, and cast lots.*

Theophylact. For perhaps many of them were in want. Or perhaps rather they did this as a reproach, and from a kind of wantonness. For what treasure did they find in His garments?

Bede. But in the lot the grace of God seems to be commended; for when the lot is cast, we yield not to the merits of any person, but to the secret judgment of God.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 12.) This matter indeed was briefly related by the three first Evangelists, but John more distinctly explains how it was done.

Theophylact. They did it then mockingly. For when the rulers scoffed, what can we say of the crowd? for it follows, *And the people stood*, who in truth had entreated that He should be crucified, *waiting*, namely, for the end. *And the rulers also with them derided.*

Augustine. (ubi sup.) Having mentioned the rulers, and said nothing of the priests, St. Luke comprehended under a general name all the chief men, so that hereby may be understood both the scribes and the elders.

Bede. And these also unwillingly confess that He saved others, for it follows, *Saying, He saved others, let him save himself, &c.*

Athanasius. (ubi sup.) Now our Lord being truly the Saviour, wished not by saving Himself, but by saving His creatures, to be acknowledged the Saviour. For neither is a physician by healing himself known to be a physician, unless he also gives proof of his skill towards the sick. So the Lord being the Saviour had no need of salvation, nor by descending from the cross did He wish to be acknowledged the Saviour, but by dying. For truly a much greater salvation does the death of the Saviour bring to men, than the descent from the cross.

Greek Expositor. Now the Devil, seeing that there was no protection for him, was at a loss, and as having no other resource, tried at last to offer Him vinegar to drink. But he knew not that he was doing this against himself; for the bitterness of wrath caused by the transgression of the law, in which he kept all men bound, he now surrendered to the Saviour, who took it and consumed it, in order that in the place of vinegar, He might give us wine to drink, which wisdom had mingled. (Prov. 9:5.)

Theophylact. But the soldiers offered Christ vinegar, as it were ministering unto a king, for it follows, *saying, If thou art the king of the Jews, save thyself.*

Bede. And it is worthy of remark, that the Jews blaspheme and mock the name of Christ, which was delivered to them by the authority of Scripture; whereas the soldiers, as being ignorant of the Scriptures, insult not Christ the chosen of God, but the King of the Jews.

23:38–43

38. And a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39. And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41. And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Theophylact. Observe a second time the device of the devil turned against himself. For in letters of three different characters he published the accusation of Jesus, that in truth it might not escape one of the passers by, that He was crucified because He made Himself King. For it is said, *In Greek, Latin, and Hebrew*, by which it was signified, that the most powerful of the nations, (as the Romans,) the wisest, (as the Greeks,) those who most worshipped God, (as the Jewish nation,) must be made subject to the dominion of Christ.

Ambrose. And rightly is the title placed above the cross, because Christ's kingdom is not of the human body, but of the power of God. I read the title of the King of the Jews, when I read, *My kingdom is not of this world.* (John 18:36.) I read the cause of Christ written above His head, when I read, *And the Word was God.* (John 1:1.) For *the head of Christ is God.* (1 Cor. 11:3.)

Cyril of Alexandria. Now one of the thieves uttered the same revilings as the Jews, but the other tried to check his words, while he confessed his own guilt, adding, *We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds.*

Chrysostom. Here the condemned performs the office of judge, and he begins to decide concerning truth who before Pilate confessed his crime only after many tortures. For the judgment of man from whom secret things are hid is of one kind; the judgment of God who searches the heart of another. And in the former case punishment follows after confession, but here confession is made unto salvation. But he also pronounces Christ innocent, adding, *But this man hath done nothing wrong*: as if to say, Behold a new injury, that innocence should be condemned with crime. We kill the living, He raised the dead. We have stolen from others, He bids us give up even what is our own. The blessed thief thus taught those that stood by, uttering the words by which he rebuked the other. But when he saw that the ears of those who stood by were stopped up, he turns to Him who knoweth the hearts; for it follows, *And he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* Thou beholdest the Crucified, and thou acknowledgest Him to be thy Lord. Thou seest the form of a condemned criminal, and thou proclaimest the dignity of a king. Stained with a thousand crimes, thou askest the Fountain of righteousness to remember thy wickedness, saying, But I discover thy hidden kingdom; and thou turnest away my public iniquities, and acceptest the faith of a secret intention. Wickedness usurped the disciple of truth, truth did not change the disciple of wickedness.

Gregory. (Mor. 18. c. 40.) On the cross nails had fastened his hands and feet, and nothing remained free from torture, but his heart and tongue. By the inspiration of God, the thief offered to Him the whole which he found free, that as it is written, *With the heart he might believe unto righteousness, with the mouth he might confess unto salvation.* (Rom. 10:10.) But the three virtues which the Apostle speaks of, (1 Cor. 13:13.) the thief suddenly filled with grace both received and preserved on the cross. He had faith, for example, who believed that God would reign whom he saw dying equally with himself. He had hope who asked for an entrance into His kingdom. He preserved charity also zealously in his death, who for his iniquity reproved his brother and fellow-thief, dying for a like crime to his own.

Ambrose. A most remarkable example is here given of seeking after conversion, seeing that pardon is so speedily granted to the thief. The Lord quickly pardons, because the thief is quickly converted. And grace is more abundant than prayer; for the Lord ever gives more than He is asked for. The thief asked that He should remember him, but our Lord answers, *Verily I say unto thee, This day shall thou be with me in Paradise.* To be with Christ is life, and where Christ is, there is His kingdom.

Theophylact. And as every king who returns victorious carries in triumph the best of his spoils, so the Lord having despoiled the devil of a portion of his plunder, carries it with Him into Paradise.

Chrysostom. Here then might one see the Saviour between the thieves weighing in the scales of justice faith, and unbelief. The devil cast Adam out of Paradise. Christ brought the thief into Paradise before the whole world, before the Apostles. By a mere word and by faith alone he entered into Paradise, that no one after his sins might despair of entrance. Mark the rapid change, from the cross to heaven, from condemnation to Paradise, that you may know that the Lord did it all, not with regard to the thief's good intention, but His own mercy.

But if the reward of the good has already taken place, surely a resurrection will be superfluous. For if He introduced the thief into Paradise while his body remained in corruption without, it is clear there is no resurrection of the body. Such are the words of some, But shall the flesh which has partaken of the toil be deprived of the reward? Hear Paul speaking, *Then must this corruptible put on incorruption.* (1 Cor. 15:53.) But if the Lord promised the kingdom of heaven, but introduced the thief into Paradise, He does not yet recompense him the reward. But they say, Under the name of Paradise He signified the kingdom of heaven, using a well-known name in addressing a thief who knew nothing of difficult teaching. Now some do not read it, *This day shall thou be with me in Paradise*, but thus, *I say unto thee on this day*, and then follows, *thou shalt be with me in Paradise.* But we will add a still more obvious solution. For physicians when they see a man in a desperate state, say, He is already dead. So also the thief, since he no longer fears his falling back to perdition, is said to have entered Paradise.

Theophylact. This however is more true than all, that although they have not obtained all the promises, I mean, the thief and the other saints in order that without us they might not be made perfect, (Heb. 11:40.) they are notwithstanding in the kingdom of heaven and Paradise.

Gregory of Nyssa. Here again, we must examine how the thief should be thought worthy of Paradise, seeing that a flaming sword prevents the entrance of the saints. But observe that the word of God describes it as turning about, so as it should obstruct the unworthy, but open a free entrance to life to the worthy.

Gregory. (Mor. 12. c. 9.) Or that flaming sword is said to be *turning*, because that He knew the time would come when it must be removed; when He in truth should come, who by the mystery of His incarnation was to open to us the way of Paradise.

Ambrose. But it must also be explained how the others, that is, Matthew and Mark, introduced two thieves reviling, while Luke, one reviling, the other resisting him. Perhaps this other at first reviled, but was suddenly converted. It may also have been spoken of one, but in the plural number; as in the Hebrews, *They wandered in goat-skins, and they were sawn asunder;* (Heb. 11:37.) whereas Elijah alone is related to have had a goat-skin, and Isaiah to have been sawn asunder. But mystically, the two thieves represent the two sinful people who were to be crucified by baptism with Christ, (Rom. 6:3.) whose disagreement likewise represents the difference of believers.

Bede. For as many of us as were baptized in Christ Jesus, were baptized in His death; but we are washed by baptism, seeing we were sinners. But some, in that they praise God suffering in the flesh, are crowned; others, in that they refuse to have the faith or works of baptism, are deprived of the gift which they have received.

23:44–46

44. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

45. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst.

46. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

Cyril of Alexandria. As soon as the Lord of all had been given up to be crucified, the whole framework of the world bewailed its rightful Master, and the light was darkened at mid-day, (Amos 8:9.) which was a manifest token that the souls of those who crucified Him would suffer darkness.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 17.) What is here said of the darkness, the other two Evangelists, Matthew and Mark, confirm, but St. Luke adds the cause whence the darkness arose, saying, *And the sun was darkened.*

Augustine. (de Civ. Dei, l. iii. c. 15.) This darkening of the sun it is quite plain did not happen in the regular and fixed course of the heavenly bodies, because it was then the Passover, which is always celebrated at the full moon. But a regular eclipse of the sun does not take place except at new moon.

Pseudo-Dionysius. (Dion. Areop. ad Polye.) When we were both at Heliopolis together, we both saw at the same time in a marvellous manner the moon meeting the sun, (for it was not then the time of new moon,) and then again, from the ninth hour until evening supernaturally brought back to the edge of the sun's diameter. (ad diametrum solis.) Besides, we observed that this obscuration began from the east, and having reached as far as the sun's western border at length returned, and that the loss and restoration of light took place not from the same side, but from opposite sides of the diameter. Such were the miraculous events of that time, and possible to Christ alone who is the cause of all things.

Greek Expositor. This miracle then took place that it might be made known, that He who had undergone death was the Ruler of the whole creation.

Ambrose. The sun also is eclipsed to the sacrilegious, that it may overshadow the scene of their awful wickedness; darkness was spread over the eyes of the unbelieving, that the light of faith might rise again.

Bede. But Luke, wishing to join miracle to miracle, adds, *And the veil of the temple was rent in twain.* This took place when our Lord expired, as Matthew and Mark bear witness, but Luke related it by anticipation.

Theophylact. By this then our Lord shewed that the Holy of Holies should be no longer inaccessible, but being given over into the hands of the Romans, should be defiled, and its entrance laid open.

Ambrose. The veil also is rent, by which is declared the division of the two people, and the profanation of the synagogue. The old veil is rent that the Church may hang up the new veils of faith. The covering of the synagogue is drawn up, that we may behold with the eyes of the mind the inward mysteries of religion now revealed to us.

Theophylact. Whereby it is signified that the veil which kept us asunder from the holy things which are in heaven, is broken through, namely, enmity and sin.

Ambrose. It took place also at that time when every mystery of Christ's assumed mortality was fulfilled, and His immortality alone remained; as it follows, *And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said.*

Bede. By invoking the Father He declares Himself to be the Son of God, but by commending His Spirit, He signifies not the weakness of His strength, but His confidence in the same power with the Father.

Ambrose. The flesh dies that the Spirit may rise again. The Spirit is commended to the Father, that heavenly things also may be loosed from the chain of iniquity, and peace be made in heaven, which earthly things should follow.

Chrysostom. Now this voice teaches us, that the souls of the saints are not henceforth shut up in hell as before, but are with God, Christ being made the beginning of this change.

Athanasius. (de Incar. et cout. Ar.) For He commends to His Father through Himself all mankind quickened in Him; for we are His members; as the Apostle says, *Ye are all one in Christ.* (Gal. 3:28.)

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. i. de Res.) But it becomes us to enquire how our Lord distributes Himself into three parts at once; into the bowels of the earth, as He told the Pharisees; into the Paradise of God, as He told the thief; into the hands of the Father, as it is said here. To those however who rightly consider, it is scarcely worthy of question, for He who by His divine power is in every place, is present in any particular place.

Ambrose. His spirit then is commended to God, but though He is above He yet gives light to the parts below the earth, that all things may be redeemed. For Christ is all things, and in Christ are all things.

Gregory of Nyssa. (ut sup.) There is another explanation, that at the time of His Passion, His Divinity being once united to His humanity, left neither part of His humanity, but of its own accord separated the soul from the body, yet shewed itself abiding in each. For through the body in which He suffered death He vanquished the power of death, but through the soul He prepared for the thief an entrance into Paradise. Now Isaiah says of the heavenly Jerusalem, which is no other than Paradise, *Upon my hands I have painted thy walls;* (Is. 49:16. ap. LXX.) whence it is clear, that he who is in Paradise dwelleth in the hands of the Father.

Damascene. (Hom. de Sabb. San.) Or to speak more expressly, In respect of His body, He was in the grave, in respect of His soul, He was in hell, and with the thief in Paradise; but as God, on the throne with His Father and the Holy Spirit.

Theophylact. But crying with a loud voice He gives up the ghost, because He had in Himself the power of laying down His life and taking it up again.

Ambrose. He gave up His Spirit, because He did not lose it as one unwilling; for what a man sends forth is voluntary, what he loses, compulsory.

23:47–49

47. Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

48. And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

49. And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

Augustine. (iv. de Trin. c. 13.) When after uttering that voice He immediately gave up the ghost, those who were present greatly marvelled. For those who hung upon the cross were generally tortured by a prolonged death. Hence it is said, *Now when the centurion saw, &c.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 20.) There is no contradiction in that Matthew says, that the centurion seeing the earthquake marvelled, whereas Luke says that he marvelled, that Jesus while uttering the loud voice expired, shewing what power He had when He was dying. But in that Matthew not only says, *at the sight of the earthquake*, but added, *and at the things that were done*, he has made it clear that there was ample room for Luke to say, that the centurion marvelled at the death of the Lord. But because Luke also himself said, *Now when the centurion saw what was done*, he has included in

that general expression all the marvellous things which took place at that hour, as if relating one marvellous event of which all those miracles were the parts and members. Again, because one Evangelist stated that the centurion said, *Truly this man was the Son of God*, but Luke gives the words, *was a just man*, they might be supposed to differ. But either we ought to understand that both these were said by the centurion, and that one Evangelist related one, another another. Or perhaps, that Luke expresses the opinion of the centurion, in what respect he called Him the Son of God. For perhaps the centurion did not know Him to be the Only-begotten, equal to the Father, but called Him the Son of God, because he believed Him to be just, as many just persons are called the sons of God. (Gen. 6:2, 4.) But again, because Matthew added, *those who were with the centurion*, while Luke omits this, there is no contradiction, since one says what another is silent about. And Matthew said, *They were greatly afraid*; but Luke does not say that *he feared*, but that *he glorified God*. Who then does not see that by fearing he glorified God?

Theophylact. The words of our Lord seem now to be fulfilled, wherein He said, *When I shall be lifted up I will draw all men unto me*. For when lifted upon the cross He drew to Him the thief and the centurion, besides some of the Jews also, of whom it follows, *And all the people that came together smote their breasts*.

Bede. By their smiting their breasts as if betokening a penitential sorrow, two things may be understood; either that they bewailed Him unjustly slain whose life they loved, or that remembering that they had demanded His death, they trembled to see Him in death still farther glorified. But we may observe, that the Gentiles fearing God glorify Him with works of public confession; the Jews only striking their breasts returned silent home.

Ambrose. O the breasts of the Jews, harder than the rocks! The judge acquits, the officer believes, the traitor by his death condemns his own crime, the elements flee away, the earth quakes, the graves are opened; the hardness of the Jews still remains immoveable, though the whole world is shaken.

Bede. Rightly then by the centurion is the faith of the Church signified, which in the silence of the synagogue bears witness to the Son of God. And now is fulfilled that complaint which the Lord makes to His Father, *neighbour and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance because of misery*. (Ps. 88:18.) Hence it follows, *And all his acquaintance stood afar off.*

Theophylact. But the race of women formerly cursed remains and sees all these things; for it follows, *And the women which followed him from Galilee, seeing these things*. And thus they are the first to be renewed by justification, or by the blessing which flows from His passion, as also from His resurrection.

23:50–56

50. And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just:

51. (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them;) he was of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews: who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

52. This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

53. And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

54. And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

55. And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

56. And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath day according to the commandment.

Greek Expositor. (Photius.) Joseph had been at one time a secret disciple of Christ, but at length bursting through the bonds of fear, and become very zealous, he took down the body of our Lord, basely hanging on the cross; thus gaining a precious jewel by the meekness of His words. Hence it follows, *And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counsellor.*

Bede. A counsellor, or decurio, is so called because he is of the order of the curia or council, and administers the office of the curia. He is also wont to be called curialis, from his management of civil duties. Joseph then is said to have been of high rank in the world, but of still higher estimation before God; as it follows, *A good man, and a just, of Arimathæa, a city of the Jews, &c.* Arimathæa is the same as Ramatha, the city of Helcanah and Samuel.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 22.) Now John says, that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus. Hence it is also here added, *Who also himself waited for the kingdom of God*. But it naturally causes surprise how he who for fear was a secret disciple should have dared to beg our Lord's body, which none of those who openly followed Him dared to do; for it is said, *This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus*. We must understand then, that he did this from confidence in his rank, by which he might be privileged to enter familiarly into Pilate's presence. But in performing that last funeral rite, he seems to have eared less for the Jews, although it was his custom in hearing our Lord to avoid their hostility.

Bede. So then being fitted by the righteousness of his works for the burial of our Lord's body, he was worthy by the dignity of his secular power to obtain it. Hence it follows, *And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen*. By the simple burial of our Lord, the pride of the rich is condemned, who not even in their graves can be without their wealth.

Athanasius. (in Vit. Ant. 90.) They also act absurdly who embalm the bodies of their dead, and do not bury them, even supposing them to be holy. For what can be more holy or greater than our Lord's body? And yet this was placed in a tomb until it rose again the third day. For it follows, *And he laid it in a hewn sepulchre*.

Bede. That is, hewn out of a rock, lest if it had been built of many stones, and the foundations of the tomb being dug up after the resurrection, the body should be said to have been stolen away. It is laid also in a new tomb, *wherein never man before was laid*, lest when the rest of the bodies remained after the resurrection, it might be suspected that some other had risen again. But because man was created on the sixth day, rightly being crucified on the sixth day our Lord fulfilled the secret of man's restitution. It follows, *And it was the day of the* παρασκευὴ, which means the preparation, the name by which they called the sixth day, because on that day they prepared the things which were necessary for the Sabbath. But because on the seventh day the Creator rested from His work, the Lord on the Sabbath rested in the grave. Hence it follows, *And the Sabbath was dawning*. Now we said above, that

all His acquaintance stood afar off, and the women which followed Him. These then of His acquaintance, after His body was taken down, returned to their homes, but the women who more tenderly loved Him, following His funeral, desired to see the place where He was laid. For it follows, *And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid*, that in truth they might make the offerings of their devotion at the proper time.

Theophylact. For they had not yet sufficient faith, but prepared as if for a mere man spices and ointments, after the manner of the Jews, who performed such duties to their dead. Hence it follows, *And they returned, and prepared spices*. For our Lord being buried, they were occupied as long as it was lawful to work, (that is, until sun-set,) in preparing ointments. But it was commanded to keep silence on the Sabbath, that is, rest from evening to evening. For it follows, *And rested the sabbath day according to the commandment*.

Ambrose. Now mystically, the just man buries the body of Christ. For the burial of Christ is such as to have no guile or wickedness in it. But rightly did Matthew call the man rich, for by carrying Him that was rich he knew not the poverty of faith. The just man covers the body of Christ with linen. Do thou also clothe the body of Christ with His own glory, that thou mayest be thyself just. And if thou believest it to be dead, still cover it with the fulness of His own divinity. But the Church also is clothed with the grace of innocence.

Bede. He also wraps Jesus in clean linen, who has received Him with a pure mind.

Ambrose. Nor without meaning has one Evangelist spoken of a new tomb, another of the tomb of Joseph. For the grave is prepared by those who are under the law of death; the Conqueror of death has no grave of His own. For what fellowship hath God with the grave. He alone is enclosed in this tomb, because the death of Christ, although it was common according to the nature of the body, yet was it peculiar in respect of power. But Christ is rightly buried in the tomb of the just, that He may rest in the habitation of justice. For this monument the just man hews out with the piercing word in the hearts of Gentile hardness, that the power of Christ might extend over the nations. And very rightly is there a stone rolled against the tomb; for whoever has in himself truly buried Christ, must diligently guard, lest he lose Him, or lest there be an entrance for unbelief.

Bede. Now that the Lord is crucified on the sixth day and rests on the seventh, signifies that in the sixth age of the world we must of necessity suffer for Christ, and as it were be crucified to the world. (Gal. 6:14.) But in the seventh age, that is, after death, our bodies indeed rest in the tombs, but our souls with the Lord. But even at the present time also holy women, (that is, humble souls,) fervent in love, diligently wait upon the Passion of Christ, and if perchance they may be able to imitate Him, with anxious carefulness ponder each step in order, by which this Passion is fulfilled. And having read, heard, and called to mind all these, they next apply themselves to make ready the works of virtue, by which Christ may be pleased, in order that having finished the preparation of this present life, in a blessed rest they may at the time of the resurrection meet Christ with the frankincence of spiritual actions.

CHAP. 24

24:1–12

1. Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

2. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4. And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

5. And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6. He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7. Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8. And they remembered his words,

9. And returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.

12. Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

Bede. Devout women not only on the day of preparation, but also when the sabbath was passed, that is, at sun-set, as soon as the liberty of working returned, bought spices that they might come and anoint the body of Jesus, as Mark testifies. (Mark 16:1.) Still as long as night time restrained them, they came not to the sepulchre. And therefore it is said, *On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, &c.* One of the Sabbath, (una Sabbathi) or the first of the Sabbath, is the first day from the Sabbath; which Christians are wont to call "the Lord's day," because of our Lord's resurrection. But by the women coming to the sepulchre very early in the morning, is manifested their great zeal and fervent love of seeking and finding the Lord.

Ambrose. Now this place has caused great perplexity to many, because while St. Luke says, *Very early in the morning*, Matthew says that it was in the evening of the sabbath that the women came to the sepulchre. But you may suppose that the Evangelists spoke of different occasions, so as to understand both different parties of women, and different appearances. Because however it was written, that *in the evening of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week*, (Matt. 28:1.) our Lord rose, we must so take it, as that neither on the morning of the Lord's day, which is the first after the sabbath, nor on the sabbath, the resurrection should be thought to have taken place. For how are the three days fulfilled? Not then as the day grew towards evening, but in the evening of the night He rose. Lastly, in the Greek it is "late;" (ὀψὶ) but late signifies both the hour at the end of the day, and the slowness of any thing; as we say, "I have been lately told." Late then is also the dead of the night. And thus also the women had the opportunity of coming to the sepulchre when the guards were asleep. And that you may know it was in the night time, some of the women are ignorant of it. They know who watch night and day, they know not who have gone back. According to John, one Mary Magdalene knows not, for the same person could not first know and then afterwards be ignorant. Therefore if there are several Maries, perhaps also there are several Mary Magdalenes, since the former is the name of a person, the second is derived from a place.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 24.) Or Matthew by the first part of the night, which is the evening, wished to represent the night itself, at the end of which night they came to the sepulchre, and for this reason, because they had been now preparing since the evening, and it was lawful to bring spices because the sabbath was over.

Eusebius. The Instrument of the Word lay dead, but a great stone enclosed the sepulchre, as if death had led Him captive. But three days had not yet elapsed, when life again puts itself forth after a sufficient proof of death, as it follows, *And they found the stone rolled away.*

Theophylact. An angel had rolled it away, as Matthew declares.

Chrysostom. (Hom. 90. in Matt.) But the stone was rolled away after the resurrection, on account of the women, that they might believe that the Lord had risen again, seeing indeed the grave without the body. Hence it follows, *And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.*

Cyril of Alexandria. When then they found not the body of Christ which was risen, they were distracted by various thoughts, and for their love of Christ and the tender care they had shewn Him, were thought worthy of the vision of angels. For it follows, *And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments.*

Eusebius. The messengers of the health-bearing resurrection and their shining garments stand for tokens of pleasantness and rejoicing. For Moses preparing plagues against the Egyptians, perceived an angel in the flame of fire. But not such were those who appeared to the women at the sepulchre, but calm and joyful as became them to be seen in the kingdom and joy of the Lord. And as at the Passion the sun was darkened, holding forth signs of sorrow and woe to the crucifiers of our Lord, so the angels, heralds of life and resurrection, marked by their white garments the character of the health-bearing feast day.

Ambrose. But how is it that Mark has mentioned one young man sitting in white garments, and Matthew one, but John and Luke relate that there were seen two angels sitting in white garments.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. ut sup.) We may understand that one Angel was seen by the women, as both Mark and Matthew say, so as supposing them to have entered into the sepulchre, that is, into a certain space which was fenced off by a kind of wall in front of the stone sepulchre; and that there they saw an Angel sitting on the right hand, which Mark says, but that afterwards when they looked into the place where our Lord was lying, they saw within two other Angels standing, (as Luke says,) who spoke to encourage their minds, and build up their faith. Hence it follows, *And as they were afraid.*

Bede. The holy women, when the Angels stood beside them, are reported not to have fallen to the ground, but to have bowed their faces to the earth; nor do we read that any of the saints, at the time of our Lord's resurrection, worshipped with prostration to the ground either our Lord Himself, or the Angels who appeared to them. Hence has arisen the ecclesiastical custom, either in memory of our Lord's resurrection, or in the hope of our own, of praying on every Lord's day, and through the whole season of Pentecost, not with bended knees, but with our faces bowed to the earth. But not in the sepulchre, which is the place of the dead, was He to be sought, who rose from the dead to life. And therefore it is added, *They said to them*, that is, the Angels to the women, *Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen.* On the third day then, as He Himself foretold to the women, together with the rest of His disciples, He celebrated the triumph of His resurrection. Hence it follows, *Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again, &c.* For on the day of the preparation at the ninth hour giving up the ghost, buried in the evening, early on the morning of the first day of the week He rose again.

Athanasius. (Lib. de Inc. Fil. Dei.) He might indeed at once have raised His body from the dead. But some one would have said that He was never dead, or that death plainly had never existed in Him. And perhaps if the resurrection of our Lord had been delayed beyond the third day, the glory of incorruption had been concealed. In order therefore to shew His body to be dead, He suffered the interval of one day, and on the third day manifested His body to be without corruption.

Bede. One day and two nights also He lay in the sepulchre, because He joined the light of His single death to the darkness of our double death.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now the women, when they had received the sayings of the Angels, hastened to tell them to the disciples; as it follows, *And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest.* For woman who was once the minister of death, is now the first to receive and tell the awful mystery of the resurrection. The female race has obtained therefore both deliverance from reproach, and the withdrawal of the curse.

Ambrose. It is not allowed to women to teach in the church, but they shall ask their husbands at home. (1 Tim. 2:12, 1 Cor. 14:35.) To those then who are at home is the woman sent. But who these women were he explains, adding, *It was Mary Magdalene*,

Bede. (who Was also the sister of Lazarus,) *and Joanna*, (the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward,) *and Mary the mother of James*, (that is, the mother of James the less, and Joseph.) And it is added generally of the others, *and other women that were with them, which told these things to the Apostles.*

Bede. (ex Amb.) For that the woman might not endure the everlasting reproach of guilt from men, she who had transfused sin into the man, now also transfuses grace.

Theophylact. Now the miracle of the resurrection is naturally incredible to mankind. Hence it follows, *And their words seemed to them as idle tales.*

Bede. (ex Greg.) Which was not so much their weakness, as so to speak our strength. For the resurrection itself was demonstrated to those who doubted

by many proofs, which while we read and acknowledge we are through their doubts confirmed in the truth.

Theophylact. Peter, as soon as he heard this, delays not, but runs to the sepulchre; for fire when applied to matter knows no delay; as it follows, *Then arose Peter, and ran to the sepulchre.*

Eusebius. For he alone believed the women saying that they had seen Angels; and as he was of more ardent feelings than the rest, he anxiously put himself foremost, looking every where for the Lord; as it follows, *And stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves.*

Theophylact. But now when he was at the tomb, he first of all obtained that he should marvel at those things which had before been derided by himself or the others; as it is said, *And departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass*; that is, wondering in himself at the way in which it had happened, how the linen clothes had been left behind, since the body was anointed with myrrh; or what opportunity the thief had obtained, that putting away the clothes wrapped up by themselves, he should take away the body with the soldiers standing round.

Augustine. Luke is supposed to have mentioned this concerning Peter, recapitulating. For Peter ran to the sepulchre at the same time that John also went, as soon as it had been told to them alone by the women, (especially Mary Magdalene,) that the body was taken away. But the vision of Angels took place afterwards. Luke therefore mentioned Peter only, because to him Mary first told it. It may also strike one, that Luke says that Peter, not entering but stooping down, saw the linen clothes by themselves, and departed wondering, whereas John says, that he himself saw the linen clothes in the same position, and that he entered after Peter. We must understand then that Peter first saw them stooping down, which Luke mentions, John omits, but that he afterwards entered before John came in.

Bede. According to the mystical meaning, by the women coming early in the morning to the sepulchre, we have an example given us, that having cast away the darkness of our vices, we should come to the Body of the Lord. For that sepulchre also bore the figure of the Altar of the Lord, wherein the mysteries of Christ's Body, not in silk or purple cloth, but in pure white linen, like that in which Joseph wrapped it, ought to be consecrated, that as He offered up to death for us the true substance of His earthly nature, so we also in commemoration of Him should place on the Altar the flax, pure from the plant of the earth, and white, and in many ways refined by a kind of crushing to death. But the spices which the women bring, signify the odour of virtue, and the sweetness of prayers by which we ought to approach the Altar. The rolling back of the stone alludes to the unclosing of the Sacraments which were concealed by the veil of the letter of the law which was written on stone, the covering of which being taken away, the dead body of the Lord is not found, but the living body is preached; for although we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. (2 Cor. 5:16.) But as when the Body of our Lord lay in the sepulchre, Angels are said to have stood by, so also at the time of consecration are they to be believed to stand by the mysteries of Christ. Let us then after the example of the devout women, whenever we approach the heavenly mysteries, because of the presence of the Angels, or from reverence to the Sacred Offering, with all humility, bow our faces to the earth, recollecting that we are but dust and ashes.

24:13–24

13. And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

14. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.

16. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.

17. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18. And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

19. And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people:

20. And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

21. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to day is the third day since these things were done.

22. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre;

23. And when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

Gloss. (non occ.) After the manifestation of Christ's resurrection made by the Angels to the women, the same resurrection is further manifested by an appearance of Christ Himself to His disciples; as it is said, *And behold two of them.*

Theophylact. Some say that Luke was one of these two, and for this reason concealed his name.

Ambrose. Or to two of the disciples by themselves our Lord shewed Himself in the evening, namely, Ammaon and Cleophas.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 25.) The fortress mentioned here we may not unreasonably take to have been also called according to Mark, a village, He next describes the fortress, saying, *which was from Jerusalem about the space of sixty stades, called Emmaus.*

Bede. It is the same as Nicopolis, a remarkable town in Palestine, which after the taking of Judæa under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius, changed together with its condition its name also. But the stadium which, as the Greeks say, was invented by Hercules to measure the distances of roads, is the

eighth part of a mile; therefore sixty stades are equal to seven miles and fifty paces. And this was the length of journey which they were walking, who were certain about our Lord's death and burial, but doubtful concerning His resurrection. For the resurrection which took place after the seventh day of the week, no one doubts is implied in the number eight. The disciples therefore as they walk and converse about the Lord had completed the sixth mile of their journey, for they were grieving that He who had lived without blame, had come at length even to death, which He underwent on the sixth day. They had completed also the seventh mile, for they doubted not that He rested in the grave. But of the eighth mile they had only accomplished half; for the glory of His already triumphant resurrection, they did not believe perfectly.

Theophylact. But the disciples above mentioned talked to one another of the things which had happened, not as believing them, but as bewildered at events so extraordinary.

Bede. And as they spoke of Him, the Lord comes near and joins them, that He may both influence their minds with faith in His resurrection, and fulfil that which He had promised, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them* (Mat. 18:20); as it follows, *And it came to pans while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.*

Theophylact. For having now obtained a spiritual body, distance of place is no obstacle to His being present to whom He wished, nor did He any further govern His body by natural laws, but spiritually and supernaturally. Hence as Mark says, He appeared to them in a different form, in which they were not permitted to know Him; for it follows, *And their eyes were holden that they should not know him*; in order truly that they may reveal their entirely doubtful conceptions, and uncovering their wound may receive a cure; and that they might know that although the same body which suffered, rose again, yet it was no longer such as to be visible to all, but only to those by whom He willed it to be seen; and that they should not wonder why henceforth He walks not among the people, seeing that His conversation was not fit for mankind, but rather divine; which is also the character of the resurrection to come, in which we shall walk as the Angels and the sons of God.

Gregory. (23. in Ev.) Rightly also He refrained from manifesting to them a form which they might recognise, doing that outwardly in the eyes of the body, which was done by themselves inwardly in the eyes of the mind. For they in themselves inwardly both loved and doubted. Therefore to them as they talked of Him He exhibited His presence, but as they doubted of Him He concealed the appearance which they knew. He indeed conversed with them, for it follows, *And he said to them, What manner of communications, &c.*

Greek Expositor. (Anonm. in Cat. Gr.) They were in truth discoursing among themselves, no longer expecting to see Christ alive, but sorrowing as concerning their Saviour slain. Hence it follows, *And one of them whose name was Cleophas, answering him said, Art thou only a stranger?*

Theophylact. As if he said, "Art thou a mere stranger, and one dwelling beyond the confines of Jerusalem, and therefore unacquainted with what has happened in the midst of it, that thou knowest not these things?

Bede. Or he says this, because they thought Him a stranger, whose countenance they did not recognise. But in reality He was a stranger to them, from the infirmity of whose natures, now that He had obtained the glory of the resurrection, He was far removed, and to whose faith, as yet ignorant of His resurrection, He remained foreign. But again the Lord asks; for it follows, *And he said unto them, What things?* And their answer is given, *Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet*. They confess Him to be a Prophet, but say nothing of the Son of God; either not yet perfectly believing, or fearful of falling into the hands of the persecuting Jews; either knowing not who He was, or concealing the truth which they believed. They add in praise of Him, *mighty in deed and word.*

Theophylact. First comes deed, then word; for no word of teaching is approved unless first he who teaches shews himself to be a doer thereof. For acting goes before sight; for unless by thy works thou hast cleansed the glass of the understanding, the desired brightness does not appear. But still further it is added, *Before God and all the people*. For first of all we must please God, and then have regard as far as we can to honesty before men, that placing the honour of God first, we may live without offence to mankind.

Greek Expositor. (ut sup.) They next assign the cause of their sadness, the betrayal and passion of Christ; and add in the voice of despair, *But we hoped it had been he who should have redeemed Israel*. We hoped, (he says,) not we hope; as if the death of the Lord were like to the deaths of other men.

Theophylact. For they expected that Christ would redeem Israel from the evils that were rising up among them and the Roman slavery. They trusted also that He was an earthly king, whom they thought would be able to escape the sentence of death passed upon Him.

Bede. Reason had they then for sorrow, because in some sort they blamed themselves for having hoped redemption in Him whom now they saw dead, and believed not that He would rise again, and most of all they bewailed Him put to death without a cause, whom they knew to be innocent.

Theophylact. And yet those men seem not to have been altogether without faith, by what follows, *And besides all this, to day is the third day since these things were done*. Whereby they seem to have a recollection of what the Lord had told them that He would rise again on the third day.

Greek Expositor. The disciples also mention the report of the resurrection which was brought by the women; adding, *Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, &c.* They say this indeed as if they did not believe it; wherefore they speak of themselves as frightened or astonished. For they did consider as established what was told them, or that there had been an angelic revelation, but derived from it reason for astonishment and alarm. The testimony of Peter also they did not regard as certain, since he did not say that he had seen our Lord, but conjectured His resurrection from the fact that His body was not lying in the sepulchre. Hence it follows, *And certain of them that were with us went, &c.*

Augustine. (ut sup.) But since Luke has said that Peter ran to the sepulchre, and has himself related the words of Cleophas, that some of them went to the sepulchre, he is understood to confirm the testimony of John, that two went to the sepulchre. He first mentioned Peter only, because to him first Mary had related the news.

24:25–35

25. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

26. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

28. And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?

33. And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34. Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.

Theophylact. Because the above-mentioned disciples were troubled with too much doubt, the Lord reproves them, saying, *O fools*, (for they almost used the same words as those who stood by the cross, *He saved others, himself he cannot save.*) And He proceeds, *and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken*. For it is possible to believe some of these things and not all; as if a man should believe what the Prophets say of the cross of Christ, as in the Psalms, *They pierced my hands and my feet*; (Ps. 22:16.) but should not believe what they say of the resurrection, as, *Thou shall not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption*. (Ps. 16:10.) But it becomes us in all things to give faith to the Prophets, as well in the glorious things which they predicted of Christ, as the inglorious, since through the suffering of evil things is the entrance into glory. Hence it follows, *Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into his glory?* that is, as respects His humanity.

Isidore of Peleusium. (lib. iii. Ep. 98.) But although it behoved Christ to suffer, yet they who crucified Him are guilty of inflicting the punishment. For they were not concerned to accomplish what God purposed. Therefore their execution of it was impious, but God's purpose most wise, who converted their iniquity into a blessing upon mankind, using as it were the viper's flesh for the working of a health-giving antidote.

Chrysostom. And therefore our Lord goes on to shew that all these things did not happen in a common way, but from the predestined purpose of God. Hence it follows, *And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.* As if He said, Since ye are slow I will render you quick, by explaining to you the mysteries of the Scriptures. For the sacrifice of Abraham, when releasing Isaac he sacrificed the ram, prefigured Christ's sacrifice. But in the other writings of the Prophets also there are scattered about mysteries of Christ's cross and the resurrection.

Bede. But if Moses and the Prophets spoke of Christ, and prophesied that through His Passion He would enter into glory, how does that man boast that he is a Christian, who neither searches how these Scriptures relate to Christ, nor desires to attain by suffering to that glory which he hopes to have with Christ.

Greek Expositor. But since the Evangelist said before, *Their eyes were holden that they should not know him*, until the words of the Lord should move their minds to faith, He fitly affords in addition to their hearing a favourable object to their sight. As it follows, *And they drew nigh to the fortress whither they were going, and he feigned as if he was going further.*

Augustine. (de Qu. Ev. lib. ii. c. 51.) Now this relates not to falsehood. For not every thing we feign is a falsehood, but only when we feign that which means nothing. But when our feigning has reference to a certain meaning it is not a falsehood, but a kind of figure of the truth. Otherwise all the things figuratively spoken by wise and holy men, or even by our Lord Himself, must be accounted falsehoods. For to the experienced understanding truth consists not in certain words, but as words so also deeds are feigned without falsehood to signify a particular thing.

Gregory. (Hom. 22 in Ev.) Because then He was still a stranger to faith in their hearts, *He feigned as if he would go further*. By the word "fingere" we mean to put together or form, and hence formers or preparers of mud we call "figuli." He who was the Truth itself did nothing then by deceit, but exhibited Himself in the body such as He came before them in their minds. But because they could not be strangers to charity, with whom charity was walking, they invite Him as if a stranger to partake of their hospitality. Hence it follows, *And they compelled him*. From which example it is gathered that strangers are not only to be invited to hospitality, but even to be taken by force.

Gloss. They not only compel Him by their actions, but induce Him by their words; for it follows, *saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far gone*, (that is, towards its close.)

Gregory. (ut sup.) Now behold Christ since He is received through His members, so He seeks His receivers through Himself; for it follows, *And he went in with them*. They lay out a table, they bring food. And God whom they had not known in the expounding of Scriptures, they knew in the breaking of bread; for it follows, *And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.*

Chrysostom. This was said not of their bodily eyes, but of their mental sight.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. iii. c. 25.) For they walked not with their eyes shut, but there was something within them which did not permit them to know that which they saw, which a mist, darkness, or some kind of moisture, frequently occasions. Not that the Lord was not able to transform His flesh that it should be really a different form from that which they were accustomed to behold; since in truth also before His passion, He was transfigured in the mount, so that His face was bright as the sun. But it was not so now. For we do not unfitly take this obstacle in the sight to have been caused by Satan, that Jesus might not be known. But still it was so permitted by Christ up to the sacrament of the bread, that by partaking of the unity of His body, the obstacle of the enemy might be understood to be removed, so that Christ might be known.

Theophylact. But He also implies another thing, that the eyes of those who receive the sacred bread are opened that they should know Christ. For the Lord's flesh has in it a great and ineffable power.

Augustine. (ut sup.) Or because the Lord feigned as if He would go farther, when He was accompanying the disciples, expounding to them the sacred

Scriptures, who knew not whether it was He, what does He mean to imply but that through the duty of hospitality men may arrive at a knowledge of Him; that when He has departed from mankind far above the heavens, He is still with those who perform this duty to His servants. He therefore holds to Christ, that He should not go far from him, whoever being taught in the word communicates in all good things to him who teaches. (Gal. 6:6.) For they were taught in the word when He expounded to them the Scriptures. And because they followed hospitality, Him whom they knew not in the expounding of the Scriptures, they know in the breaking of bread. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. (Rom. 2:13.)

Gregory. (ut sup.) Whoever then wishes to understand what he has heard, let him hasten to fulfil in work what he can now understand. Behold the Lord was not known when He was speaking, and He vouchsafed to be known when He is eating. It follows, *And he vanished out of their sight.*

Theophylact. For He had not such a body as that He was able to abide longer with them, that thereby likewise He might increase their affections. *And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn, within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?*

Origen. By which is implied, that the words uttered by the Saviour inflamed the hearts of the hearers to the love of God.

Gregory. (Hom. 10. in Ev.) By the word which is heard the spirit is kindled, the chill of dulness departs, the mind becomes awakened with heavenly desire. It rejoices to hear heavenly precepts, and every command in which it is instructed, is as it were adding a faggot to the fire.

Theophylact. Their hearts then were turned either by the fire of our Lord's words, to which they listened as the truth, or because as He expounded the Scriptures, their hearts wore greatly struck within them, that He who was speaking was the Lord. Therefore were they so rejoiced, that without delay they returned to Jerusalem. And hence what follows, *And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem.* They rose up indeed the same hour, but they arrived after many hours, as they had to travel sixty stades.

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. iii. c. 25.) It had been already reported that Jesus had risen by the women, and by Simon Peter, to whom He had appeared. For these two disciples found them talking of these things when they came to Jerusalem; as it follows, *And they found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.*

Bede. It seems that our Lord appeared to Peter first of all those whom the four Evangelists and the Apostle mention.

Chrysostom. For He did not shew Himself to all at the same time, in order that He might sow the seeds of faith. For he who had first seen and was sure, told it to the rest. Afterwards the word going forth prepared the mind of the hearer for the sight, and therefore He appeared first to him who was of all the most worthy and faithful. For He had need of the most faithful soul to first receive this sight, that it might be least disturbed by the unexpected appearance. And therefore He is first seen by Peter, that he who first confessed Christ should first deserve to see His resurrection, and also because he had denied Him He wished to see him first, to console him, lest he should despair. But after Peter, He appeared to the rest, at one time fewer in number, at another more, which the two disciples attest; for it follows, *And they told what things were done by the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread.*

Augustine. (ut sup.) But with respect to what Mark says, that they told the rest, and they did not believe them, whereas Luke says, that they had already begun to say, *The Lord is risen indeed*, what must we understand, except that there were some even then who refused to believe this?

24:36–40

36. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

37. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

38. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

39. Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and feet.

Chrysostom. The report of Christ's resurrection being published every where by the Apostles, and while the anxiety of the disciples was easily awakened to see Christ, He that was so much desired comes, and is revealed to them that were seeking and expecting Him. Nor in a doubtful manner, but with the clearest evidence, He presents Himself, as it is said, *And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. l. iii. c. 25.) This manifestation of our Lord after His resurrection, John also relates. But when John says that the Apostle Thomas was not with the rest, while according to Luke, the two disciples on their return to Jerusalem found the eleven gathered together, we must understand undoubtedly that Thomas departed from them, before our Lord appeared to them as they spoke these things. For Luke gives occasion in his narrative, that it may be understood that Thomas first went out from them when the rest were saying these things, and that our Lord entered afterwards. Unless some one should say that the eleven were not those who were then called Apostles, but that these were eleven disciples out of the large number of disciples. But since Luke has added, *And those that were with them*, he has surely made it sufficiently evident that those called the eleven were the same as those who were called Apostles, with whom the rest were.

But let us see what mystery it was for the sake of which, according to Matthew and Mark, our Lord when He rose again gave the following command, *I will go before you into Galilee, there shall ye see me.* Which although it was accomplished, yet it was not till after many other things had happened, whereas it was so commanded, that it might be expected that it would have taken place alone, or at least before other things.

Ambrose. Therefore I think it most natural that our Lord indeed instructed His disciples, that they should see Him in Galilee, but that He first presents Himself as they remained still in the assembly through fear.

Greek Expositor. Nor was it a violation of His promise, but rather a mercifully hastened fulfilment on account of the cowardice of the disciples.

Ambrose. But afterwards when their hearts were strengthened, the eleven set out for Galilee. Or there is no difficulty in supposing that they should be reported to have been fewer in the assembly, and a larger number on the mountain.

Eusebius. For the two Evangelists, that is, Luke and John, write that He appeared to the eleven alone in Jerusalem, but those two disciples told not only the eleven, but all the disciples and brethren, that both the angel and the Saviour had commanded them to hasten to Galilee; of whom also Paul made mention, saying, *Afterwards he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once.* (1 Cor. 15:6.) But the truer explanation is, that at first indeed while they remained in secret at Jerusalem, He appeared once or twice for their comfort, but that in Galilee not in the assembly, or once or twice, but with great power, He made a manifestation of Himself, shewing Himself living to them after His Passion with many signs, as Luke testifies in the Acts. (Acts 1:3.)

Augustine. (ut sup.) But that which was said by the Angel, that is the Lord, must be taken prophetically, for by the word Galilee according to its meaning of transmigration, it is to be understood that they were about to pass over from the people of Israel to the Gentiles, to whom the Apostles preaching would not entrust the Gospel, unless the Lord Himself should prepare His way in the hearts of men. And this is what is meant by, *He shall go before you into Galilee, there shall ye see him.* But according to the interpretation of Galilee, by which it means "manifestation," we must understand that He will be revealed no more in the form of a servant, but in that form in which He is equal to the Father, which He has promised to His elect. That manifestation will be as it were the true Galilee, when we shall see Him as He is. This will also be that far more blessed transmigration from the world to eternity, from whence though coming to us He did not depart, and to which going before us He has not deserted us.

Theophylact. The Lord then standing in the midst of the disciples, first with His accustomed salutation of "peace," allays their restlessness, shewing that He is the same Master who delighted in the word wherewith He also fortified them, when He sent them to preach. Hence it follows, *And he said to them, Peace be unto you; I am he, fear not.*

Gregory Nazianzen. (Orat. 22.) Let us then reverence the gift of peace, which Christ when He departed hence left to us. Peace both in name and reality is sweet, which also we have heard to be of God, as it is said, *The peace of God*; (Phil. 4:7.) and that God is of it, as *He is our peace.* (Eph. 2:14.) Peace is a blessing commended by all, but observed by few. What then is the cause? Perhaps the desire of dominion or riches, or the envy or hatred of our neighbour, or some one of those vices into which we see men fall who know not God. For peace is peculiarly of God, who binds all things together in one, to whom nothing so much belongs as the unity of nature, and a peaceful condition. It is borrowed indeed by angels and divine powers, which are peacefully disposed towards God and one another. It is diffused through the whole creation, whose glory is tranquillity. But in us it abides in our souls indeed by the following and imparting of the virtues, in our bodies by the harmony of our members and organs, of which the one is called beauty, the other health.

Bede. The disciples had known Christ to be really man, having been so long a time with Him; but after that He was dead, they do not believe that the real flesh could rise again from the grave on the third day. They think then that they see the spirit which He gave up at His passion. Therefore it follows, *But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.* This mistake of the Apostles was the heresy of the Manichæans.

Ambrose. But persuaded by the example of their virtues, we can not believe that Peter and John could have doubted. Why then does Luke relate them to have been affrighted. First of all because the declaration of the greater part includes the opinion of the few. Secondly, because although Peter believed in the resurrection, yet he might be amazed when the doors being closed Jesus suddenly presents Himself with His body.

Theophylact. Because by the word of peace the agitation in the minds of the Apostles was not allayed, He shews by another token that He is the Son of God, in that He knew the secrets of their hearts; for it follows, *And he said to them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?*

Bede. What thoughts indeed but such as were false and dangerous. For Christ had lost the fruit of His passion, had He not been the Truth of the resurrection; just as if a good husbandman should say, What I have planted there, I shall find, that is, the faith which descends into the heart, because it is from above. But those thoughts did not descend from above, but ascended from below into the heart like worthless plants.

Cyril of Alexandria. Here then was a most evident sign that He whom they now see was none other but the same whom they had seen dead on the cross, and lain in the sepulchre, who knew every thing that was in man.

Ambrose. Let us then consider how it happens that the Apostles according to John believed and rejoiced, according to Luke are reproved as unbelieving. John indeed seems to me, as being an Apostle, to have treated of greater and higher things; Luke of those which relate and are close akin to human. The one follows an historic course, the other is content with an abridgment, because it could not be doubted of him, who gives his testimony concerning those things at which he was himself present. And therefore we deem both true. For although at first Luke says that they did not believe, yet he explains that they afterwards did believe.

Cyril of Alexandria. Now our Lord testifying that death was overcome, and human nature had now in Christ put on incorruption, first shews them His hands and His feet, and the print of the nails; as it follows, *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself.*

Theophylact. But He adds also another proof, namely, the handling of His hands and feet, when He says, *Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have.* As if to say, Ye think me a spirit, that is to say, a ghost, as many of the dead are wont to be seen about their graves. But know ye that a spirit hath neither flesh nor bones, but I have flesh and bones.

Ambrose. Our Lord said this in order to afford us an image of our resurrection. For that which is handled is the body. But in our bodies we shall rise again. But the former is more subtle, the latter more carnal, as being still mixed up with the qualities of earthly corruption. Not then by His incorporeal nature, but by the quality of His bodily resurrection, Christ passed through the shut doors.

Gregory. (Mor. 14. c. 55.) For in that glory of the resurrection our body will not be incapable of handling, and more subtle than the winds and the air, (as Eutychius said,) but while it is subtle indeed through the effect of spiritual power, it will be also capable of handling through the power of nature. It follows, *And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet*, on which indeed were clearly marked the prints of the nails. But according to John, He also shewed them His side which had been pierced with the spear, that by manifesting the scar of His wounds He might heal the wound of their doubtfulness. But from this place the Gentiles are fond of raising up a calumny, as if He was not able to cure the wound inflicted on Him. To whom we must answer, that it is not probable that He who is proved to have done the greater should be unable to do the less. But for the sake of His sure purpose, He who destroyed death would not blot out the signs of death. First indeed, that He might thereby build up His disciples in the faith of His resurrection. Secondly, that supplicating the Father for us, He might always shew forth what kind of death He endured for many. Thirdly, that He might point out to those redeemed by His death, by setting before them the signs of that death, how mercifully they have been succoured. Lastly, that He might declare in the judgment how justly the wicked are condemned.

24:41–44

41. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?

42. And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb.

43. And he took it, and did eat before them.

44. And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.

Cyril of Alexandria. The Lord had shewn His disciples His hands and His feet, that He might certify to them that the same body which had suffered rose again. But to confirm them still more, He asked for something to eat.

Gregory of Nyssa. (Orat. 1. de Res.) By the command of the law indeed the Passover was eaten with bitter herbs, because the bitterness of bondage still remained, but after the resurrection the food is sweetened with a honeycomb; as it follows, *And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and a honeycomb.*

Bede. To convey therefore the truth of His resurrection, He condescends not only to be touched by His disciples, but to eat with them, that they might not suspect that His appearance was not actual, but only imaginary. Hence it follows, *And when he had eaten before them, he took the remnant, and gave to them.* He ate indeed by His power, not from necessity. The thirsty earth absorbs water in one way, the burning sun in another way, the one from want, the other from power.

Greek Expositor. But some one will say, If we allow that our Lord ate after His resurrection, let us also grant that all men will after the resurrection take the nourishment of food. But these things which for a certain purpose are done by our Saviour, are not the rule and measure of nature, since in other things He has purposed differently. For He will raise our bodies, not defective but perfect and incorrupt, who yet left on His own body the prints which the nails had made, and the wound in His side, in order to shew that the nature of His body remained the same after the resurrection, and that He was not changed into another substance.

Bede. He ate therefore after the resurrection, not as needing food, nor as signifying that the resurrection which we are expecting will need food; but that He might thereby build up the nature of a rising body. But mystically, the broiled fish of which Christ ate signifies the sufferings of Christ. For He having condescended to lie in the waters of the human race, was willing to be taken by the hook of our death, and was as it were burnt up by anguish at the time of His Passion. But the honeycomb was present to us at the resurrection. By the honeycomb He wished to represent to us the two natures of His person. For the honeycomb is of wax, but the honey in the wax is the Divine nature in the human.

Theophylact. The things eaten seem also to contain another mystery. For in that He ate part of a broiled fish, He signifies that having burnt by the fire of His own divinity our nature swimming in the sea of this life, and dried up the moisture which it had contracted from the waves, He made it divine food; and that which was before abominable He prepared to be a sweet offering to God, which the honeycomb signifies. Or by the broiled fish He signifies the active life, drying up the moisture with the coals of labour, but by the honeycomb, the contemplative life on account of the sweetness of the oracles of God.

Bede. But after that He was seen, touched, and had eaten, lest He should seem to have mocked the human senses in any one respect, He had recourse to the Scriptures. *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, when I was yet with you*, that is, when I was yet in the mortal flesh, in which ye also are. He indeed was then raised again in the same flesh, but was not in the same mortality with them. And He adds, *That all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.*

Augustine. (de Con. Ev. lib. i. c. 11.) Let those then who dream that Christ could have done such things by magical arts, and by the same art have consecrated His name to the nations to be converted to Him, consider whether He could by magical arts fill the Prophets with the Divine Spirit before He was born. For neither supposing that He caused Himself to be worshipped when dead, was He a magician before He was born, to whom one nation was assigned to prophesy His coming.

24:45–49

45. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures,

46. And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day:

47. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48. And ye are witnesses of these things.

49. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

Bede. After having presented Himself to be seen with the eye, and handled with hands, and having brought to their minds the Scriptures of the law, He next opened their understanding that they should understand what was read.

Theophylact. Otherwise, how would their agitated and perplexed minds have learnt the mystery of Christ. But He taught them by His words; for it follows, *And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer*, that is, by the wood of the Cross.

Bede. But Christ would have lost the fruit of His Passion had He not been the Truth of the resurrection, therefore it is said, *And to rise from the dead.* He then after having commended to them the truth of the body, commends the unity of the Church, adding, *And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations.*

Eusebius. For it was said, *Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.* (Ps. 2:8.) But it was necessary that those who were

converted from the Gentiles should be purged from a certain stain and defilement through His virtue, being as it were corrupted by the evil of the worship of devils, and as lately converted from an abominable and unchaste life. And therefore He says that it behoves that first repentance should be preached, but next, remission of sins, to all nations. For to those who first shewed repentance for their sins, by His saving grace He granted pardon of their transgression, for whom also He endured death.

Theophylact. But herein that He says, *Repentance and remission of sins*, He also makes mention of baptism, in which by the putting off of our past sins there follows pardon of iniquity. But how must we understand baptism to be performed in the name of Christ alone, whereas in another place He commands it to be in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost. First indeed we say that it is not meant that baptism is administered in Christ's name alone, but that a person is baptized with the baptism of Christ, that is, spiritually, not Judaically, nor with the baptism, wherewith John baptized unto repentance only, but unto the participation of the blessed Spirit; as Christ also when baptized in Jordan manifested the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove. Moreover you must understand baptism in Christ's name to be in His death. For as He after death rose again on the third day, so we also are three times dipped in the water, and fitly brought out again, receiving thereby an earnest of the immortality of the Spirit. This name of Christ also contains in itself both the Father as the Anointer, and the Spirit as the Anointing, and the Son as the Anointed, that is, in His human nature. But it was fitting that the race of man should no longer be divided into Jews and Gentiles, and therefore that He might unite all in one, He commanded that their preaching should begin at Jerusalem, but be finished with the Gentiles. Hence it follows, *Beginning at Jerusalem.* (Rom. 3:2, Rom. 9:4.)

Bede. Not only because to them were entrusted the oracles of God, and theirs is the adoption and the glory, but also that the Gentiles entangled in various errors might by this sign of Divine mercy be chiefly invited to come to hope, seeing that to them even who crucified the Son of God pardon is granted.

Chrysostom. (Hom. i. in Act.) Further, lest any should say that abandoning their acquaintances they went to shew themselves, (or as it were to vaunt themselves with a kind of pomp,) to strangers, therefore first among the very murderers themselves are the signs of the resurrection displayed, in that very city wherein the frantic outrage burst forth. For where the crucifiers themselves are seen to believe, there the resurrection is most of all demonstrated.

Eusebius. But if those things which Christ foretold are already receiving their accomplishment, and His word is perceived by a seeing faith to be living and effectual throughout the whole world; it is time for men not to be unbelieving towards Him who uttered that word. For it is necessary that He should live a divine life, whose living works are shewn to be agreeable to His words; and these indeed have been fulfilled by the ministry of the Apostles. Hence He adds, *But ye are witnesses of these things, &c.* that is, of My death and resurrection.

Theophylact. Afterwards, lest they should be troubled at the thought, How shall we private individuals give our testimony to the Jews and Gentiles who have killed Thee? He subjoins, *And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, &c.* which indeed He had promised by the mouth of the prophet Joel, *I will pour my Spirit upon all flesh.* (Joel 2:18.)

Chrysostom. (Hom. i. in Act.) But as a general does not permit his soldiers who are about to meet a large number, to go out until they are armed, so also the Lord does not permit His disciples to go forth to the conflict before the descent of the Spirit. And hence He adds, *But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.*

Theophylact. That is, not with human but heavenly power. He said not, until ye receive, but be endued with, shewing the entire protection of the spiritual armour.

Bede. But concerning the power, that is, the Holy Spirit, the Angel also says to Mary, *And the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.* (Luke 1:35.) And the Lord Himself says elsewhere, *For I know that virtue is gone out of me.* (Luke 8:45.)

Chrysostom. (ut sup.) But why did not the Spirit come while Christ was present, or immediately on His departure? Because it was fitting that they should become desirous of grace, and then at length receive it. For we are then most awakened towards God, when difficulties press upon us. It was necessary in the mean time that our nature should appear in Heaven, and the covenants be completed, and that then the Spirit should come, and pure joys be experienced. Mark also what a necessity He imposed upon them of being at Jerusalem, in that He promised that the Spirit should there be given them. For lest they should again flee away after His resurrection, by this expectation, as it were a chain, He kept them all there together. But He says, *until ye be endued from on high.* He did not express the time when, in order that they may be constantly watchful. But why then marvel that He does not reveal to us our last day, when He would not even make known this day which was close at hand.

Gregory. (de Past. 3. c. 25.) They then are to be warned, whom age or imperfection hinders from the office of preaching, and yet rashness impels, lest while they hastily arrogate to themselves so responsible an office, they should cut themselves off from the way of future amendment. For the Truth Itself which could suddenly strengthen those whom it wished, in order to give an example to those that follow, that imperfect men should not presume to preach, after having fully instructed the disciples concerning the virtue of preaching, commanded them to abide in the city, until they were endued with power from on high. For we abide in a city, when we keep ourselves close within the gates of our minds, lest by speaking we wander beyond them; that when we are perfectly endued with divine power, we may then as it were go out beyond ourselves to instruct others.

Ambrose. But let us consider how according to John they received the Holy Spirit, while here they are ordered to stay in the city until they should be endued with power from on high. Either He breathed the Holy Spirit into the eleven, as being more perfect, and promised to give it to the rest afterwards; or to the same persons He breathed in the one place, He promised in the other. Nor does there seem to be any contradiction, since there are diversities of graces. Therefore one operation He breathed into them there, another He promised here. For there the grace of remitting sins was given, which seems to be more confined, and therefore is breathed into them by Christ, that you may believe the Holy Spirit to be of Christ, to be from God. For God alone forgiveth sins. But Luke describes the pouring forth of the grace of speaking with tongues.

Chrysostom. Or He said, *Receive ye the Holy Spirit*, that He might make them fit to receive it, or indicated as present that which was to come.

Augustine. (de Trin. 15. c. 26.) Or the Lord after His resurrection gave the Holy Spirit twice, once on earth, because of the love of our neighbour, and again from heaven, because of the love of God.

24:50–53

50. And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy:

53. And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Bede. Having omitted all those things which may have taken place during forty-three days between our Lord and His disciples, St. Luke silently joins to the first day of the resurrection, the last day when He ascended into heaven, saying, *And he led them out as far as to Bethany*. First, indeed, because of the name of the place, which signifies "the house of obedience." For He who descended because of the disobedience of the wicked, ascended because of the obedience of the converted. Next, because of the situation of the same village, which is said to be placed on the side of the mount of Olives; because He has placed the foundations, as it were, of the house of the obedient Church, of faith, hope, and love, in the side of that highest mountain, namely, Christ. But He blessed them to whom He had delivered the precepts of His teaching; hence it follows, *And he lifted up his hands, and blessed them*.

Theophylact. Perhaps pouring into them a power of preservation, until the coming of the Spirit; and perhaps instructing them, that as often as we go away, we should commend to God by our blessing those who are placed under us.

Origen. But that He blessed them with uplifted hands, signifies that it becomes him who blesses any one to be furnished with various works and labours in behalf of others. For in this way are the hands raised up on high.

Chrysostom. But observe, that the Lord submits to our sight the promised rewards. He had promised the resurrection of the body; He rose from the dead, and conferred with His disciples for forty days. It is also promised that we shall be caught up in the clouds through the air; this also He made manifest by His works. For it follows, *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted, &c.*

Theophylact. And Elias indeed was seen, as it were, to be taken up into heaven, but the Saviour, the forerunner of all, Himself ascended into heaven to appear in the Divine sight in His sacred body; and already is our nature honoured in Christ by a certain Angelic power.

Chrysostom. But you will say, How does this concern me? Because thou also shalt be taken up in like manner into the clouds. For thy body is of like nature to His body, therefore shall thy body be so light, that it can pass through the air. For as is the head, so also is the body; as the beginning, so also the end. See then how thou art honoured by this beginning. Man was the lowest part of the rational creation, but the feet have been made the head, being lifted up aloft into the royal throne in their head.

Bede. When the Lord ascended into heaven, the disciples adoring Him where His feet lately stood, immediately return to Jerusalem, where they were commanded to wait for the promise of the Father; for it follows, *And they worshipped him, and returned, &c.* Great indeed was their joy, for they rejoice that their God and Lord after the triumph of His resurrection had also passed into the heavens.

Greek Expositor. And they were watching, praying, and fasting, because indeed they were not living in their own homes, but were abiding in the temple, expecting the grace from on high; among other things also learning from the very place piety and honesty. Hence it is said, *And were continually in the temple*.

Theophylact. The Spirit had not yet come, and yet their conversation is spiritual. Before they were shut up; now they stand in the midst of the chief priests; distracted by no worldly object, but despising all things, they praise God continually; as it follows, *Praising and blessing God*.

Bede. And observe that among the four beasts in heaven, (Ezek. 1:10. Rev. 4:7) Luke is said to be represented by the calf, for by the sacrifice of a calf, they were ordered to be initiated who were chosen to the priesthood; (Exod. 29:1.) and Luke has undertaken to explain more fully than the rest the priesthood of Christ; and his Gospel, which he commenced with the ministry of the temple in the priesthood of Zacharias, he has finished with the devotion in the temple. And he has placed the Apostles there, about to be the ministers of a new priesthood, not in the blood of sacrifices, but in the praises of God and in blessing, that in the place of prayer and amidst the praises of their devotion, they might wait with prepared hearts for the promise of the Spirit.

Theophylact. Whom imitating, may we ever dwell in a holy life, praising and blessing God; to Whom be glory and blessing and power, for ever and ever. Amen.

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1. perfectam

2. sacramentum

1. For 'eighth number,' see above, p. 78.

1. ἀλόγα.

1. secus eum. V. Rom. 8:3. ubi sup.

1. κραίκαλη